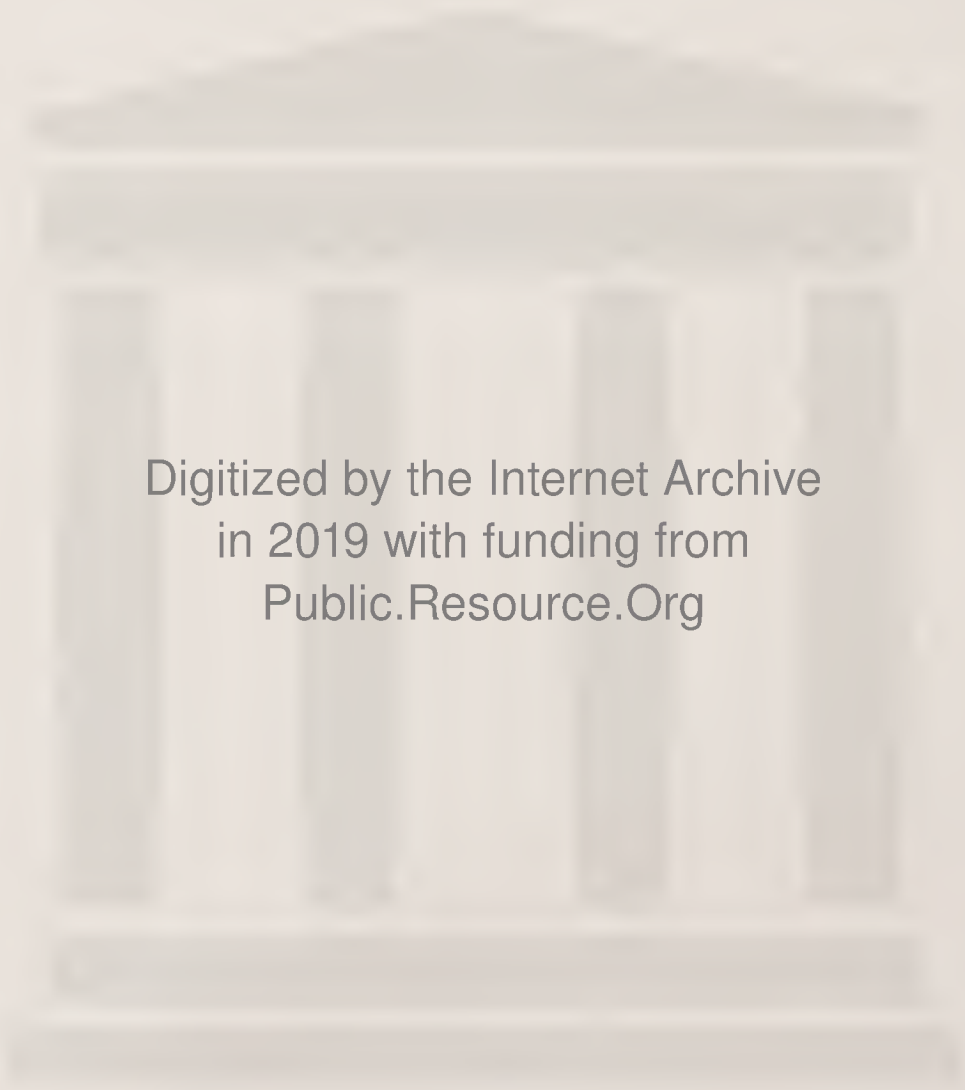


STORIES FROM THE
HISTORY OF CEYLON
FOR CHILDREN

MARIE MUSAEUS-HIGGINS





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‘ Sinhabahu.....took his mother on his right shoulder and his sister on his left.....wandered forth into the wilderness” (p. 57.)

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MARIE MUSÆUS-HIGGINS

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I

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STORIES

FROM

The History of Ceylon

FOR CHILDREN

BY

MARIE MUSÆUS-HIGGINS.

CAPPER & SONS,
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COLOMBO

1910.

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FOREWORD.

This book is an attempt to supply a want which has long been felt by those who are teaching young children in Ceylon. All children love a story. Now, though there are many stories which may fairly be considered to belong to all races and all countries, there are others which only come home to the people of a particular race or country. To the latter class belong the tales by which a child gains its first notions of the history of its own land and people. It is surely unnatural that Ceylon children, especially Sinhalese children, should be brought up on stories about King Alfred or Robert Bruce, and should have no familiar associations connected with Sita or Duttu-Gemunu. It is to meet this want that the author of this book has told in simple language some of the tales of Old Ceylon, beginning with the fine old story of Rama, which belongs to Ceylon no less than to India.

I commend the book to all who are teaching young children, and shall be glad to see it in use as a Reader in Schools.

J. HARWARD,

Director of Public Instruction in Ceylon.

October 9th, 1909.

INTRODUCTION.

"Tell us a story, mother dear, please do," called out half a dozen brown maidens with shining black eyes, when their "white mother," or rather the (European) Principal of a Boarding School for Sinhalese girls in Ceylon, came back early one evening from her accustomed walk. "My dear children," she answered kindly, "do not ask me to tell you a story *just now* I have returned from my walk and I am really tired!" "Did you walk on your mouth? mother dear" asked one naughty little girl about six years old and she looked inquiringly up to the lady. "What do you mean, Leelavattie, you impudent little thing?" and she was not a bit annoyed with this question. "I mean, dear mother," answered the little one, and her eyes sparkled with mischief, "that even if your feet were tired, your mouth might not be tired, as you tell stories with your mouth and you walk with your feet!" The lady smiled, while the bigger girls looked on in astonishment, that Leelavattie, the general favourite of the Boarding School, dared say such saucy things to their beloved "white mother."

"Listen, my little girls," said the mother, "just to-day I really feel tired, although Leela does not seem to think that I am. But I have thought for some time, that, instead of telling

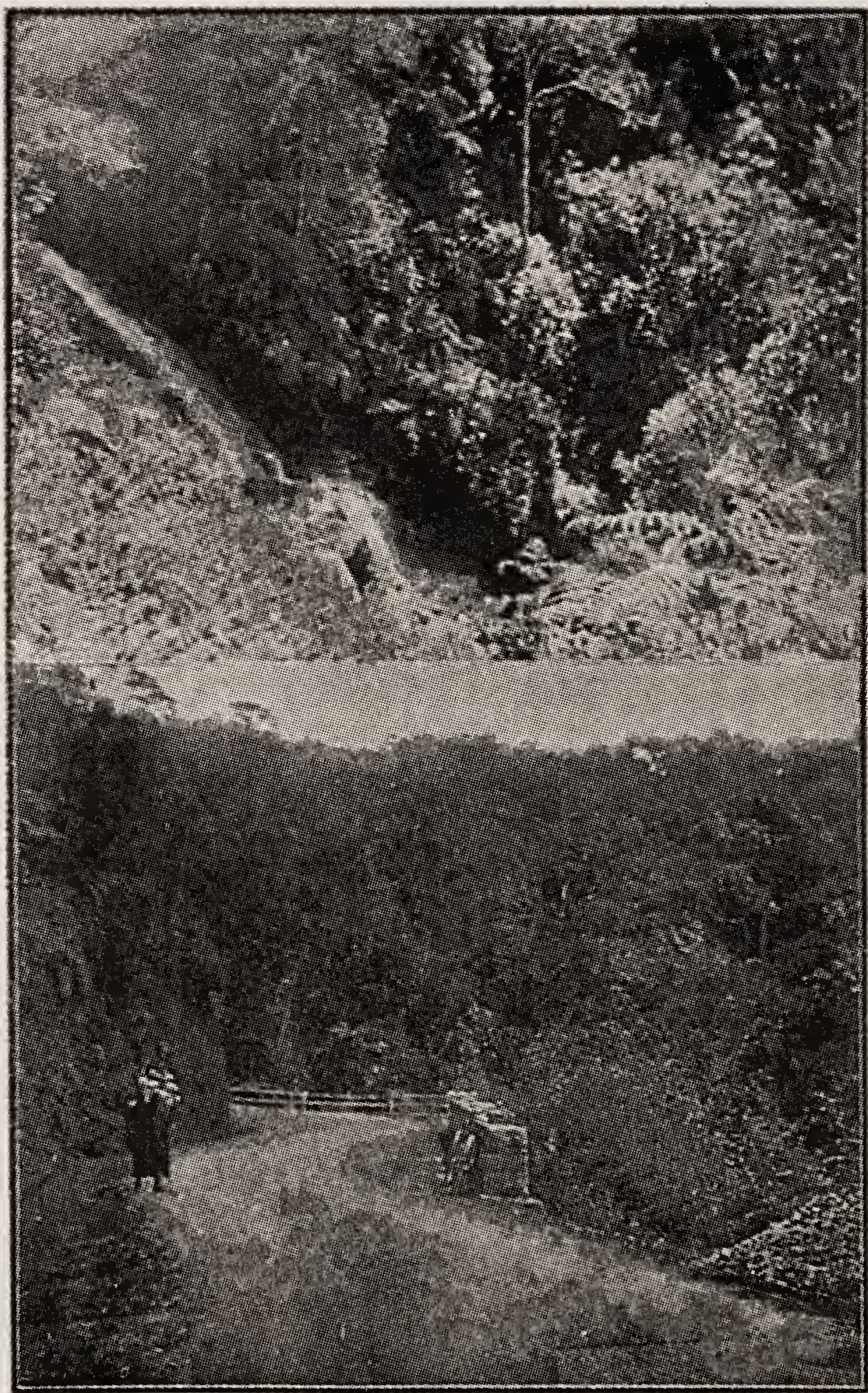
you fairy tales, as I used to, I would tell you some stories from your own History. Would you like to hear stories of some heroic and historical events which took place many years ago in your own country and in India?" "Oh yes! yes, please!" cried the children in chorus.

"All right, my little ones. We will make an agreement. All of you who are here now, and those of the other girls who would like to hear my stories from Ceylon History, come to the big side verandah, where we have a look into the garden; get me a comfortable chair with a foot-stool (don't forget that!), sit down on your mats around me, and I will tell you some pretty stories, which contain much that is true. Some of them will sound almost like fairy stories. But you must promise me that you will remember what I tell you, and some of the bigger girls must write them down, so that my other Ceylon children, who cannot listen to me, may read them later on."

"Will you begin at once?" asked little Leelavattie, who was very eager to hear the promised stories. "No, dearie, not to-day. I told you, I felt too tired. But we will begin to-morrow evening about six o'clock; just when the sun sets and makes the sky look so beautifully red. That is the right time to tell stories. Then one feels like having a sweet talk together. So, till to-morrow! Be ready then to listen, and if you are good girls, and if you like my stories, I will tell you something every evening except on Sundays, when I must be ready to meet my grown-up friends."

Very happy and grateful were the little brown maidens, when they ran away into the garden to tell their playmates of the expected treat.

As promised, the mother gathered all her dear daughters round her the next evening and began telling one story after another to the delighted children. These stories were written down by the cleverest girls for the benefit of the other Ceylon children, who had not the good luck to hear them from the lips of their mother, who told them with a great love for all the children of the East.



“ On the way to Sita-Eliya and Sita-Weva ” (p. 1.)

PRE-HISTORY.

“My dear children, I will begin my stories with one which does not actually belong to Ceylon History, but which deals with persons who came in contact with the beings who lived in Lanka at that time. We will call this Pre-History—I mean the story which tells us about the great King Rama of India, whose wife, the beautiful Sita, was stolen away by Ravana, the King of Lanka. That this old, old story has a real foundation we know without doubt. It was composed as a poem by a great Indian Sage, of the name of ‘Valmiki,’ who dwelt in the same jungle where Rama and Sita lived for a time, during their exile.”

In India, the “Ramayana” (as this great poem is called) is looked upon as the most popular Indian story brought to us from the past. The Indian children laugh or cry when their mothers tell them about the heroic deeds of Rama, or the sadness of Sita’s troubles.

Here in Ceylon we yet find places which have kept their names in memory of Sita, for instance, Sita-Weva, Sita-Eliya, etc., between Nuwara-Eliya and Hakgala, where she had to live among the dark Yakkhas or Rakshasas of Ravana’s household.

I would like my Ceylon children to be acquainted, as the Indian children are, with this beautiful story called the “Ramayana.”

STORY I.
THE RAMAYANA.

CHAPTER I.
THE FOUR PRINCES.

Once upon a time, thousands of years ago, when there was already a great civilisation in India, there lived in the land of Koshala, the Capital of which was Ayodhya, a King by the name of Dasharatha. His country, which was watered by the river Sarayu, was fertile and prosperous. The streets in his capital were broad ; they were watered every day and strewn with fresh flowers, as it was the custom of those times. Stately buildings and splendid palaces, with beautiful gardens, made the whole city look like a garden itself. Nobody was poor, and everybody was contented and satisfied. The people were of good character, and the women were lovely, free and took a high position in the land. The youths of the country were educated by the pious and devout Brahmanas.

King Dasharatha was very much beloved by his people, for he was wise and just. There was only one cloud in the sky of his reign, and that was, he was childless, and he was old.

He had three wives, which was the custom at that time, with the names of Kaushalya,

Kaikeyi, and Sumitra, and none of them had children.

The King and all the people prayed that a son might be born to become the Ruler when Dasharatha should die. They performed for this purpose a great ceremony, at which the God Vishnu appeared and promised that four sons should be born to the old King. This promise was soon fulfilled. The eldest, Queen Kausalya, became the mother of a beautiful and healthy boy and he was called Rama. The second Queen Kaikeyi's son was called Bharata, and the third Queen Sumitra became the mother of twins, Lakshmana and Shatrugna. The old King and all his subjects in Ayodhya were very happy, and the King in his joy fed all his people and gave rich gifts to the Brahmanas.

The four young Princes were brought up very carefully. The King had them instructed by the best teachers he could find, so that they became learned in the Vedas, and in the various branches of knowledge necessary to become rulers. They were also trained in the use of arms and became strong warriors. Rama, the eldest of the four Princes, was always ahead of his brothers and became the pride and delight of his old father. Lakshmana loved Rama so much that they were never seen apart, and Bharata and Shatrugna were also always together. So, the four youths grew up in love and harmony, and they considered the three wives of their father as their mothers.

When Rama's education was finished, King Dasharatha assembled his Council to consider the marriage of his eldest son. They were interrupted by the entrance of a famous Ascetic, who asked the King to let Rama go with him to punish some Rakshasas, who had disturbed his religious sacrifice. After some hesitation, King Dasharatha allowed Rama, accompanied by Lakshmana, to follow the Ascetic to his lonely hermitage. Arrived there, Rama showed his wonderful strength by killing the fierce mother of one of the Rakshasas, who was disturbing the holy man in his worship.

He also disabled or killed the other Rakshasas who had come again to interfere with the devotions of the Ascetic and thus showed his strength. As a reward for this, his first heroic deed, he received some magic weapons from the grateful Ascetic.

["What is a Rakshasa?" asked a bright little girl with the name of Mayavattie, who had listened very attentively.

"Was it very hard for Rama to kill these Rakshasas?"

"Rakshasas or Yakkhas," said the mother, "are said to have been strong beings who could change their forms as they wished, but they usually looked like men and women. They could fly, and some of them hated human beings and tried to do harm to them.

They very often devoured the people they had killed. So you see, my little girl, that

it was very brave of Rama to fight and kill those who came to disturb the holy man in his sacrifice."

"Is there any other question that one of you would like to ask before we close for the evening?" asked the mother.

"Please, is an Ascetic a monk? I am not quite sure."

"An Ascetic is a pious and good man, who has retired from the world and lives in a lonely place, called a hermitage. This is generally in the jungle, and sometimes people go to these Ascetics to ask for advice, when they are in trouble. They wear rough clothes made of skins and bark, and live on very simple food, which they either get in the jungle, or which is brought to them by their pupils."

"Thank you, dear mother, I understand now."]

CHAPTER II.

THE WONDERFUL BOW.

[The next evening the story was continued.]

Here in the hermitage of the great Ascetic, Rama heard that a certain King, Janaka of Mithila, had a wonderful bow, which had belonged to the God Siva, and had been given by the gods to one of Janaka's ancestors. The Ascetic intended to pay a visit to King Janaka and Rama entreated the Sage to let him also go to see this wonderful weapon. This was

just what the Ascetic wished, for King Janaka had promised the hand of his beautiful daughter Sita to the Prince who could bend this wonderful bow. And the Ascetic thought that Rama was just the husband for Sita.

You see, my children, this Princess Sita was a strange being, who had come to King Janaka in a very peculiar way. The King, who was very pious, just and clever, and a special favourite of the gods, had one day ploughed a field to get it ready for some sacrifice. At once a lovely maiden sprang out of the ground and stood before him smiling. She asked him to take her home and adopt her as his daughter, which he did most willingly.

King Janaka educated her with his other daughters, and as Sita had come to him, so to say, as a present from mother earth, he offered her as a prize to that Prince, who should be able to bend his magic bow.

Many brave Princes had come to win this prize, but had failed, as they could not even lift the bow. When Rama arrived, he was very anxious to try his strength on the bow, which was resting in a garlanded case on a big car. He seized the bow without effort, and with bright shining eyes, he strung it so tightly, that with the noise of a thunder-clap it broke in two.

Prince Rama had broken that bow, which nobody had been able to lift. He surely was worthy to gain this lovely maiden, destined only to wed the bravest of warriors.

King Janaka, after recovering from his surprise, looked at Rama, and putting both hands on the shoulders of this powerful youth said :
 “ My son, you surely are the son of one of the gods ; and with a joyful heart I entrust my beloved Sita, the daughter of the earth, to you. Take her and be happy.”

CHAPTER III.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE FOUR PRINCES.

King Dasharatha was very happy when he heard of the betrothal of his eldest son Rama, and he hastened at once to Mithila to give his blessing to the young couple.

He was received with great joy by King Janaka, who proposed that Rama's faithful brother Lakshmana should at the same time become the husband of his second daughter Urumila. King Dasharatha consented to this proposal with pleasure, for he had great regard for King Janaka. The two other sons of King Dasharatha had come with him, and it was decided that they should become the husbands of the two daughters of King Janaka's younger brother. So the four brothers were all married on the same day, to the delight of the people of Mithila and of Kushala.

Surrounded by their royal retinue, in gorgeous attire, and accompanied by a host of singers and dancers, the four stately young

Princes arrived at the palace. They were mounted on richly decorated elephants, shaded by the parasols of their princely rank. Surely ! this was a sight which might delight the heart of any parent !

The four young brides, decked with flowers and jewels and beaming with happiness, awaited the princes, and now the sacrificial fire was lighted. The four princely brothers with their sweet brides walked round it, while music and rejoicing filled the air, and even the gods showered flowers on them as a blessing. For seven weeks the festivities lasted, and then King Dasharatha, with the four couples, took leave of King Janaka and his royal brother, and the magnificent bridal procession wended its way to Ayodhya, accompanied by the blessings of the people.

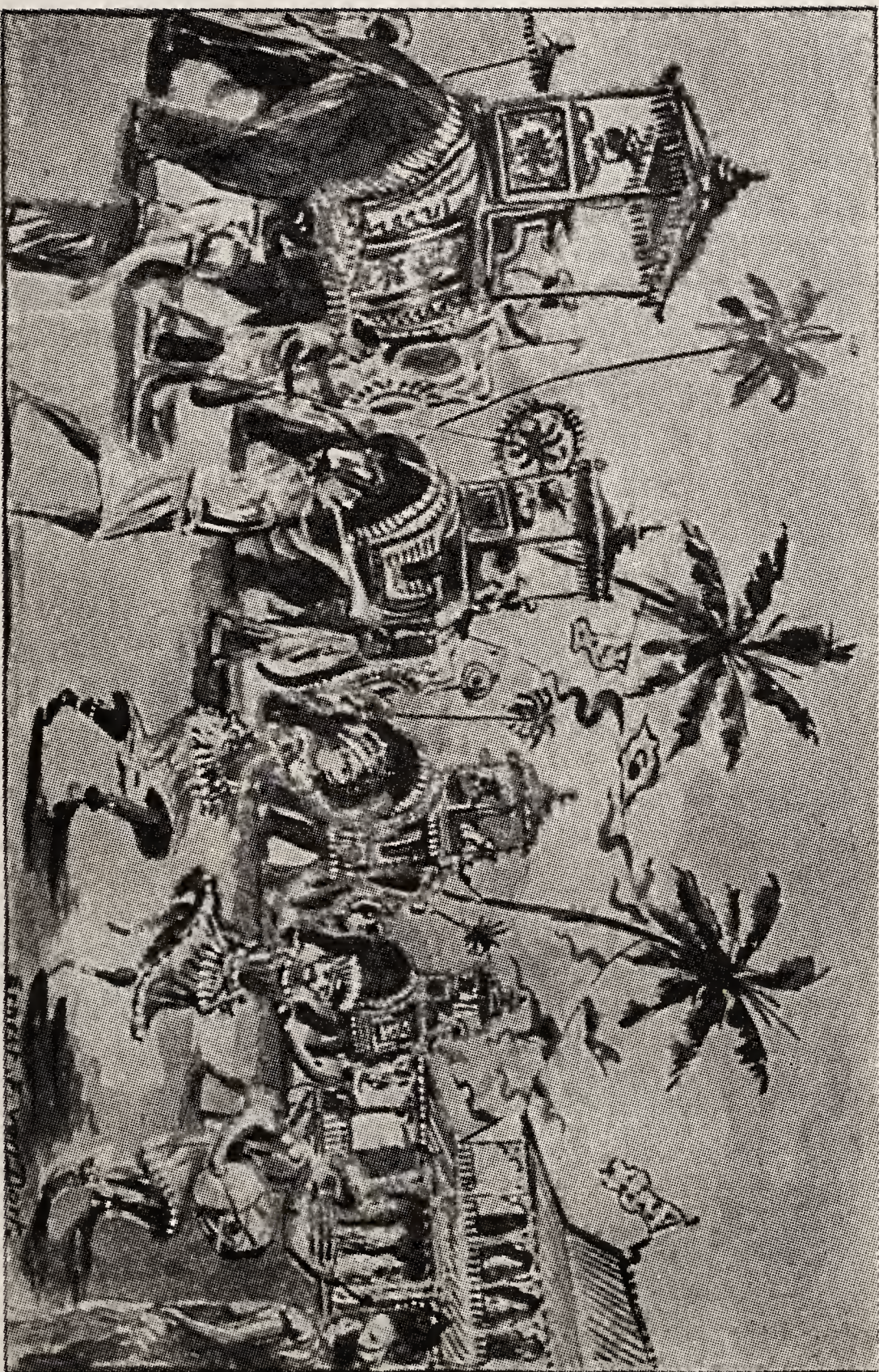
They arrived safely in the festively decorated Capital of Dasharatha's Empire and the three old Queens and the whole populace greeted them joyously. New rejoicings commenced, in which the people of the whole land joined.

And the old King felt young again, seeing the happiness of his stately sons with their lovely brides.

CHAPTER IV

SENT INTO EXILE.

Bharata and Shatrugna left Ayodhya with their brides to live in another city about seven



"They were mounted on richly decorated Elephants"etc. (p. 8.).

days' journey away from the capital, while Rama and Lakshmana, living in one of the royal palaces, remained in Ayodhya.

"Now," thought the old King, "the time has come when I can lay the burden of my throne on the strong shoulders of my eldest son Rama, who is fit in every respect to become a wise Ruler over my people."

The Councillors agreed with the King, and Rama was told to prepare himself by praying and fasting, for his coronation on the following day, the greatest event in his life.

All the citizens in Ayodhya were happy, for they loved Rama, and the streets and houses were decorated in the gayest manner in expectation of the coming great festival.

There was only one person in the whole capital who did not join in the rejoicing, and that was the second Queen Kaikeyi. At first she had also been glad when she heard the news, but she worked herself up into a frenzy of jealousy, when she was reminded by her faithful servant, that she would have to be the slave of Kaushalya, the oldest Queen, who would from to-morrow be mother of the reigning King Rama.

She made up her mind at once that *her* son Bharata should be King, and that Rama should be banished from the kingdom, and she laid her plots to force the old King to agree to them.

Then she went into the "anger-room,"* threw herself down on the floor wailing and weeping and scattered all her jewelry around. Thus the old King found her, when he came to speak to her about the great event of the coronation of his eldest son Rama.

The King was so much distressed, when he saw his most beloved wife thus grieving, that he promised he would give her anything that his power and wealth could grant, only to pacify her and make her happy again.

"I want my two boons," she cried, "the two boons you promised me when I nursed you back to health some years ago, and which I have not yet received. Swear to me that you will grant them?"

The King assented.

"The first boon I claim is," cried the cruel Queen, "that *my* son Bharata be made King." And the second boon, "that Rama be sent into exile for fourteen years as an Ascetic."

Useless was the pleading of the old King, who fell down at her feet, imploring her to withdraw her cruel commands. Through the whole night he pleaded with her, but Kaikeyi insisted on the fulfilment of her requests.

In the morning, when the news came that everything was ready for the coronation, the poor old King was worn out and speechless.

* The anger-room was a room specially set aside, where all the grievances of the royal household were to be adjusted.

So the triumphant Kaikeyi sent for Rama to tell him, herself, of his doom.

Rama, who was awaiting the summons for his coronation, drove with Lakshmana through the decorated streets of the city to the palace, and was struck by the sadness and feebleness of the silent old King on the throne, at whose side was standing Queen Kaikeyi and not *his* mother Kaushalya, as he had expected.

As the poor, broken-down old King was unable to speak, Kaikeyi told Rama of the two boons she had asked of the King, and that the King had sworn to them.

“So Bharata is to be King, and *you* have to go into exile,” she cried triumphantly.

The old King could not utter a word, for his heart was almost broken by grief. Rama stood with bowed head before them, but no word of reproach did his lips utter.

“If that is thy will, my father, I shall obey,” he said sadly, and bowing low before his father he left the presence of the King. At once he went to bid his mother farewell, and then he turned his steps towards his home, where Sita was anxiously awaiting his return as the newly-crowned King.

When he entered, silent and grave, without the outer signs of his new rank, she wistfully looked at him, and asked what the sad news was that he brought her. Gravely he answered—“Oh, my beloved, a great misfortune has come to us : I have to leave you and go as an exile

into the jungle for fourteen years. This is the wish of Queen Kaikeyi, who wants her son Bharata to become King."

Sita could not grasp the whole meaning of all this at first ; then lifting up her hands in prayer, and looking at Rama pleadingly, the lovely Princess spoke to her husband.

" "The wife belongs to her husband ; I belong to you and nobody can part us. If you have to go to the jungle, I will also go ; I shall fear nothing when I am with you.' "

Rama explained to Sita the perils and hardships of a life in the jungle ; but she pleaded so hard with him, and declared that she would die if he left her. He at last consented. And Sita was then happy like a child ; smiling and laughing, while she distributed her possessions and prepared herself to go with him, whom she loved more than her own life.

Then Lakshmana caught his brother's feet and said that he too must go with him to the jungle. He must guard his elder brother and his wife ; he must serve them day and night. As Rama saw that he was determined to go he consented, and sent him to get his magic weapons and prepare for his self-imposed exile.

When all was ready, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita put on their Ascetic garments of bark and fur, in exchange for the royal garments, and came to the palace to say farewell to King Dasharata. But the old King could

not bear to see the lovely Sita clad in the rough dress, so she had to put on again her silken clothes, and radiant in beauty she stood smiling between the two roughly clad heroes.

Amid the weeping crowd, they mounted the chariot which was to carry them into exile.

When they had gone, all light seemed to have left Ayodhya, and the poor King dropped down to the ground, overcome with grief, knowing that he would never see his beloved children again.

Accompanied for a while by many of the sorrowful people of Ayodhya, the three exiles went on their way to the jungle. Near Srīngaverapura they reached the Ganges. There they dismissed the chariot, sending many a loving message to the old King. Then they crossed the river by boat, and on the other side spent the first night in loneliness, far away from home and friends. In the morning they started to walk to the jungle. They went on till they came to Chitrakuta, where the famous Sage Valmiki was living. Here Lakshmana, ever faithful to his promise to serve them, built a cottage of rough wood and thatched with leaves. Then they offered sacrifice to the gods, and, with contented hearts, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana took possession of their first home in the jungle.

Rama made himself the protector of all the Ascetics in the jungle, and of all living creatures, also meditating and attending to his ascetic vows. Sita was like a happy child playing in

the woods ; the birds came and sang to her, the deer peeped through the bushes at her ; even the lizards, frogs and toads were not afraid of her : she talked to all and frolicked with them. She did not even fear the wild animals, and none of them made any attempt to hurt her. Only the Rakshasas she feared, and either Rama or Lakshmana was always near to protect her. So her time passed happily, and she was glad to be with Rama, although his life was that of an Ascetic and he wore rough clothes made of bark and fur. Lakshmana served them faithfully day and night, providing them with food, and ever thinking of their comfort. So our three exiles continued to live as happily as possible in their first jungle home.

[“How cruel Queen Kaikeyi was,” said Chandravattie. “I cannot understand how anybody could be so jealous and make a whole family unhappy. She surely made herself the most unhappy, because I do not think that King Dasharatha would love her any more after this.”]

“I wonder whether Bharata will really accept the throne” whispered Susina. “I know I would not do it if I were in his place.”

“Well dearie, you will hear to-morrow what Prince Bharata did,” answered the mother. The next chapter is called “The Faithful Bharata.”

“Nobody says anything about Sita,” sang out Rissie; I think she is the bravest of all of

them ! Just think of leaving a beautiful palace to live in a jungle ! And a Princess, who was accustomed to have everything she wanted and to be waited on by so many maid-servants and to have so many nice things to eat. I am sure she must have been one of the sweetest women that ever lived to be contented in a rough house in the jungle."

The mother smiled, for Rissie had talked herself quite into excitement, and turning to her she said : "You are quite right, my little girl. Sita was very brave, and you will hear later on how faithful she was, and that she needed ever so much courage in all her troubles. But I must not tell you in advance what is coming. You will hear it all in good time."

"May I ask a question now ?" said Mayavattie, "Was the Sage Valmiki you mentioned to-night the same who composed the 'Ramayana,' which you are telling us ?"

"Yes, my dear, this same Valmiki composed the 'Ramayana.' As he was living in the same jungle with Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, he had the best opportunity to watch them. And he was so delighted with their pure and unselfish lives, that he sang their praises after they had left the jungle in the great poem, which I am trying to relate to you in simple words."]

CHAPTER V.

THE FAITHFUL BHARATA.

Meanwhile there was great mourning in Ayodhya, because the King Dasharatha had died. Before his poor sad heart had ceased to beat, the old King had found comfort in the kind nursing of his wife Kaushalya. Grief had united them in love again. He told her how in his youth he was a proud "*sound*-archer," and he had killed a young Ascetic, mistaking the sound made by filling his jug with water at a spring, for the low trumpeting of an elephant. The father of this Ascetic, wild with grief, had cursed Dasharatha before he died at the side of his son and prophesied that he, the King, should die of grief for his own son. After this story was finished the old King broke out in lamentations and died.

Prince Bharata, who was living at a distance of seven days' journey from Ayodhya, was now called to perform the funeral rites of his father, and to be crowned as King. When he arrived in Ayodhya he protested violently against being crowned as King, and after the funeral ceremonies were over he started with an army to search for Rama and intended to bring him back in great triumph. On the way he was often mistrusted by those who knew where Rama was, for, seeing the army, they thought he must have some bad intentions; but they were soon convinced of his honesty, owing to his eagerness to find his elder brother. After a great deal of trou-

ble he found Rama, but even Lakshmana at first thought that he had not come in a friendly spirit and wanted to prevent Bharata seeing Rama.

But Bharata, throwing himself at Rama's feet, implored him to return to Ayodhya and be King, as his old father was dead. Rama, however declared he must do his father's bidding and stay in exile for fourteen years. Even his mother, Kaushalya, who had come with Bharata, could not shake him from this resolution. So at last, after much persuasion, Bharata took back with him the royal parasol and the gold embroidered sandals of the King, which he had brought for Rama, and sadly returned to Ayodhya.

Bharata, true to his conviction, that he ought not to be King, dressed himself as an Ascetic and lived in the neighbourhood of the capital of Rama's Empire, governing the land from there as Regent for Rama, until he should return from the forest. "The royal slippers," he said, "should stand under the royal umbrella and wait for Rama, the true King to return." Through all the fourteen years Bharata faithfully governed the kingdom.

["May I ask something?" asked a small girl with the name of Susina. "What do you mean by a 'sound-archer'?"

"A sound-archer," was the answer, "was a man who could use his bow and arrow so skillfully that he could hit an animal, just by the sound it made and without seeing it. King

Dasharatha, when he was young, was very proud of being a '*sound*-archer,' but he was too sure of his skill, and so he made that dreadful mistake of thinking that the sound made by the water when running into a metal water-jug used by the Ascetic was the gentle trumpeting of an elephant."

"Please tell me, what it means to be a Regent?" inquired gentle Amaravattie?

"A Regent is generally a Prince or man of high rank, who governs a kingdom for a young Prince until he is old enough to be crowned."

"In our case, Bharata does not govern for a child too young to be King, but governs in the *absence* of the real King; taking care of the kingdom as a Regent until Rama should return from exile."]

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPTURE OF SITA.

After Bharata had left, Rama did not care to live in the same place any longer, and all three wandered away. Going through the forest, Lakshmana always walked in front, making the road more even for Sita, so that her tender feet should not be hurt. Rama coming last, was guard. So they reached the great forest of Dandaka, where many Ascetics lived, and it was also the resort of many Rakshasas. On one occasion Sita was seized by a Rakshasa, who, laughing hideously, car-

ried her off for a short distance, and as a punishment he was killed by the two brothers.

For ten years they lived in this forest, wandering from place to place. They saw many Sages and received many teachings from them. Rama protected these Ascetics whenever they were in trouble, and Sita sat at their feet listening to their words, while Lakshmana was always ready to serve them both.

Their last cottage in this jungle was built near the Godaveri river. It was large and roomy, and they lived there contentedly for a long time. One winter morning, while they were sitting in front of their jungle-home talking of the past, and making plans for the future, as the longest part of their exile was over, a Rakshasi, horrible to look at, passed by. She fell in love with the stately looking Rama and asked him to leave the ugly, thin Sita, to marry her and be King of the Forest. When Rama politely refused this high honour she rushed at Sita to devour her, but Lakshmana, who was always ready to defend Sita, cut off the Rakshasi's ears and nose as a punishment; but did not kill her. The Rakshasi, who was the sister of Ravana, the fierce King of Lanka, and who had also some brothers living in this jungle, called the latter together and asked them to avenge her mutilation. They came at once and attacked Rama, who, clad in shining armour and with his magic weapons, destroyed them all. Sita had been sent under the protection of Lakshmana to a neighbouring cave.

The furious Rakshasi then flew over to Lanka and related to her brother Ravana the whole story, asking him to take revenge on Rama. She artfully told him that Rama was stronger than a god and could not be killed, but that he would surely die of grief if Ravana would steal away his wife Sita. She described Sita as the loveliest woman in the world, graceful and slender as a palm, a skin like shining gold, glorious dark blue eyes, and beautiful long raven black hair.

So attractive was the picture drawn by the Rakshasi, that Ravana grew wild with the wish to possess Sita.

He jumped into his wonderful air-chariot accompanied by his triumphant sister, and after a very swift flight they alighted at the home of one of the Rakshasas in the Dandaka forest, who was a subject of Ravana. This same Rakshasa had been conquered by Rama before, and so he was very much afraid of him, and he implored Ravana not to dare attack him.

"I do not care about Rama," Ravana said, "I want you to come and help me to steal Sita away from him."

The Rakshasa had to obey, although he was very unwilling to do so. As he knew where the exiles lived, he had to guide Ravana to their cottage. Arrived in the neighbourhood Ravana ordered the Rakshasa to change himself into a golden deer with silver spots and

play around the cottage, so that Sita should see it.

When Sita saw the beautiful animal which gamboled and played amid the trees, she was so delighted with the look of this uncommon creature, that she implored Rama to catch it for her. Lakshmana warned her and told her, such an animal did not exist in reality, and that it was an illusion created by the Rakshasas, but Sita would not listen.

So at last Rama yielded to her entreaties, trusted her to Lakshmana's care and followed the golden deer, which ran farther and farther away. After a long chase Rama's arrow pierced it, and the Rakshasa deer, imitating Rama's *voice*, called out loud and piercingly for help, in order to allure Lakshmana away from Sita. Sita heard this pitiful cry, and beside herself with the fear that Rama was hurt, implored Lakshmana to go and save him. She would not listen to Lakshmana's assurance that it was not Rama's cry, but a Rakshasa imitating him. Wildly she reproached Lakshmana, and even accused him of faithlessness, so at last sadly bowing down to her, whom he revered like a goddess, he left her and went in search of Rama.

This was just what Ravana wanted. He had been standing near all the time hidden by a bush. Hardly was Lakshmana out of sight, when Ravana, in the garb of an Ascetic, with a five-knotted stick and water-jug, stood before Sita. He praised her beauty while she brought

him food and water, looking at the same time anxiously into the jungle, hoping that Lakshmana would come back quickly. But neither Lakshmana nor Rama was anywhere near.

Then Ravana threw off his disguise, told her who he was and why he had come. He pleaded gently with her to go with him and be his Queen. Sita grew angry, her courage came back to her, and like a furious lioness she cried: "I am the wife of Rama! Safer would it be for you to draw a lion's tooth, or a serpent's fang, to drink poison, to bind the fire with a cloth, or to walk on iron spikes, than to touch Rama's wife.'"

Ravana only laughed at Sita, who looked twice as beautiful in her wrath. Then he thought, threats might succeed better than pleading. He assumed his gigantic form, calling out that Rama was but a man, and that *he* was Ravana, the lord of all the Rakshasas. With this he seized the shrieking Sita, mounted with her into his air-chariot and off they flew southward.

In vain Sita cried, in vain she pleaded, on and on they sped. She cried out for Rama, she called for Lakshmana; she pleaded to the river over which they flew, to the trees, to the deer which ran away frightened at the noise of the air-car. She prayed that the birds might tell Rama where she was carried by the dreadful Ravana. Then she caught sight of Jatayu, a vulture who was sleeping on a tree, and she



“He seized the shrieking Sita, mounted with her into his air-chariot and off they flew southward” (p. 22.)

implored him to help her. He spoke beseechingly to Ravana, who attacked him furiously, and after a fierce combat the vulture fell to the ground dying. On they flew again towards Lanka. Her bangles dropped to the ground, and then her golden chain. "They might become signs for Rama" she hoped. Then she saw a little further on, five monkeys, and she threw down her yellow silken gown, wishing that the monkeys might take it to Rama to show him the way to her.

Arrived in Lanka, Ravana placed the unhappy Sita securely in one of his palaces, under the care of some Rakshasis, and he was very happy that he succeeded so well in the capture of Sita.

["How dreadful it must have been to be carried away thus by force," cried the girls. Some had tears in their eyes. "Poor Sita."

"I think I just would have died of fright" said brave little Leelavattie.

"I think I would have struggled very hard, and I would have even pinched horrid old Ravana, so that he would have let me go. Besides, I would have made myself look so ugly by screaming and screeching, that he would not have wanted me at all, said another girl."

"I am afraid, my little girl, that would not have helped you much," said the mother, "for Ravana was so very strong, that he could have captured half a dozen girls at once if he had

wanted to do so. You know poor Sita tried her best to escape, but she was carried away all the same."

"But to go in an air-chariot must have been quite nice. I wonder whether Ravana's air-car was something like our balloons? asked inquisitive Yasodhara. And how was it managed I wonder!"

"Well, dear child, I almost think that Ravana's air-chariot was much grander and safer than our present air-ships. It is said somewhere that Ravana could guide it by his will. But you see, that was so very, very long ago, and it is very difficult to say how it really looked and how it moved."]

CHAPTER VII.

SITA IN LANKA.

The next morning when Ravana thought that Sita ought to have found out that she was helpless, and that she was entirely in his power, far away from Rama, he asked her to accompany him to look at his treasures. He showed her his grandest palace which had golden and crystal pillars. Some of the windows were of silver, framed in ivory. The doors were covered with precious stones, and the walls shone with sparkling diamonds. The floors were inlaid with crystal, forming grotesque figures. Gold and silver couches and stools covered with red cloth looked very inviting.

In the Assembly Hall, Ravana showed Sita a wonderful throne made of ivory and gold. He smilingly bade her accept this throne and all his riches. Then he took her to the garden, full of lovely flowers, flowering trees and fruit trees ; golden mangoes and rosy jambus smiled down at her, and the branches of the trees were filled with birds, which sang their sweet songs to her. Then Ravana bowing down at her feet said : "all this is thine, lovely Sita, if thou wilt be my Queen." "See how I honour thee, thou art the first woman to whom Ravana has bowed down." Gently but firmly Sita refused to hear his pleading, and told him again that she was Rama's wife, and would not listen to another. She warned him once more, that nobody could insult her without bringing destruction on himself and his land.

Furious at this resistance, Ravana told Sita that he would have her killed if she refused to be his Queen. Then he called some of his most cruel Rakshasis and told them to take her to the Asoka Wood, and persuade her by any means they could, to become his wife. There she might often be seen sitting under an asoka tree, surrounded by the hideous creatures who mocked and laughed at her grief. But no persuasion of theirs could make Sita unfaithful to her husband. So she lived on in her awful surroundings. But her gentleness won the hearts of some of these cruel creatures, so that they even became kind to her.

Again and again Ravana came and pleaded with her, and every time Sita, although worn out with grief, remained firm in her refusal. He told her that Rama had given up his search entirely. He even tried to prove to her that Rama was dead, but she only replied, "Then slay me also, for I will not live without Rama." At his last visit Ravana became so angry, that he swore he would only give her two months more to live, if she would not do his will. Then he turned away with the intention not to see her again, until these two months had passed, for fear that he might so lose his temper that he would kill her. He had made a vow that he would never kill an innocent woman, and although a Rakshasa, he had never broken this vow. Therefore he put this check upon himself, that the promise might not be broken even now.

Sita lived for ten long months in these trying surroundings, ever grieving yet hoping that a time would come when Rama would free her. Wandering about in the woods, she used to call the birds to her and whispered to them loving messages to carry to Rama, for Rama was always in her mind.

["I am so very sorry for poor Sita, she must have loved Rama very much indeed, otherwise she would have accepted all the riches Ravana offered her."

"Yes, just think of the beautiful throne she might have sat on, if she had become Ravana's Queen," chimed in a very small girl. "All ivory

and gold ; I am afraid I would have at least tried, how it would feel to sit on it."

All the girls laughed at dear little Sumana, who felt quite ashamed after she had made such a long speech.]

CHAPTER VIII.

RAMA'S SEARCH.

Now let us go back to India and see what has become of Rama. He had killed the golden deer you know, which Sita wished so much to have, and on his way back to the hut he met Lakshmana, who came towards him slowly and sadly.

"What has happened to Sita?" Rama called out in fear. "Why did you leave her?"

Lakshmana explained why Sita had sent him away, and both hastened back to the cottage. It was empty.

They searched everywhere, but no Sita was to be found. Rama asked every tree, every bird, even tigers and elephants, in sad tones, whether they had seen Sita. He called out for Sita piteously, thinking that perhaps she might be at play with him. No answer came, the jungle was silent ! The two brothers ran to the river, Sita was not there, they hastened back to the jungle searching everywhere. They saw a herd of deer, which lifted up their heads and turned to the *south*, and they were asked whether they had seen Sita. So the brothers rushed to the south. Then they found the poor vulture Jatayu lying in his blood, almost

dead. He related to them what he knew and then died. They found Sita's bangles and new hopes came to them. Then they were attacked by a gigantic Rakshasa, whom they killed. But he recognised Rama before he died and advised him to find the monkey-chief Sugriva and make friends with him. *He* surely could help him to find Sita. So the two brothers went on their way to find him.

When Rama and Lakshmana came to the shores of the beautiful Lake Pampa, near the country of the monkey-chief Sugriva, they met the monkey Hanuman, his Councillor, in the disguise of an Ascetic. He was sent by Sugriva to find out the wants of the two strong looking men, in splendid armour, who had come to his country.

Rama told Hanuman his story, and asked for help in the search for Sita. Hanuman answered that he thought the monkey-chief would help him, if both the strong brothers would assist him first, to conquer his brother. This brother had taken away Sugriva's wife and children. And Sugriva wished to get them back and also to become king of the monkeys in his brother's place. Rama consented to assist Sugriva, if Sugriva would help him afterwards. Hanuman, then taking the form of a gigantic monkey, took both the brothers on his back and carried them swiftly to his chief. Rama and Sugriva soon became friends and consulted how they could help each other.

Rama assisted Sugriva in the fight with his brother, who was killed as punishment for carrying away Sugriva's wife and children. After installing him as king of the monkeys Rama and Lakshmana retired to a neighbouring cave, where they lived during the rainy season. They intended to commence the search for Sita again as soon as it should be over.

["Please, dear mother, tell us, what kind of a monkey Hanuman was, that he could take Rama and Lakshmana on his back and carry them to the monkey-chief?"]

"Well you see! my children," was the answer, "it is said, that these monkeys were not ordinary monkeys. They had the power to make themselves small or big and take any form they wished. They were very clever and even learned, and could talk like people. The same can be said of the bears and vultures, of whom you will hear later. But you need not be afraid of meeting such beings *now*, for they do not exist any more."

The children smiled and were contented. Some of them had really been a little afraid of meeting a huge monkey like Hanuman.]

CHAPTER IX.

HANUMAN'S SEARCH AND FROLIC.

The four months of the monsoon had seemed like four years to Rama, who wished anxiously for the rains to cease, that he might again begin the search for Sita. As soon as the weather

became fair, he urged Lakshmana to go to the Monkey-King to remind him of his promise. Sugriva had really almost forgotten Rama's grief, amid the pleasures of his new court.

Seriously reprimanded by Lakshmana, he called his monkey-army together and came to Rama as the head of it. After consulting together, Sugriva sent four strong parties to the North, South, East and West of the country. He gave them *one* month to find out the lost Sita, promising great rewards for the finder. All four parties searched diligently, but after a month's work in the North, East and West the three disappointed parties came back to Rama's camp without having found a single trace of Sita. The fourth party, which had gone to the South, had also failed, and when the month was over they intended rather to die than return without success. They dropped to the earth to starve themselves to death. So they were seen by a vulture who had his home in a large tree near by. Thinking there would be plenty of food for himself, he came out of his retreat. When he heard them saying faintly "that they wanted to die for Rama's sake like the faithful Jatayu," he enquired about Jatayu, who was his brother. Hanuman, who was among these monkeys, asked the vulture "whether he had seen anything of Sita?" and the vulture replied, that he had seen Ravana carrying away a fair woman some months ago. He thought that might have been Sita. Then Hanuman asked the vulture to use his marvellous sight and try whether he

could not find Sita in Lanka. The vulture's sight ranged a little over eight hundred miles. and using it in looking over to Lanka, he saw Sita in one of Ravana's palaces.

Now came the question, who could jump far enough to cross the Ocean between India and Lanka? Only Hanuman would be able to do this, because he was the son of the God of the Winds. Climbing up to the top of a mountain and taking a gigantic monkey form, he bounded into the air.

After many adventures, even falling into the Ocean sometimes, he reached beautiful Lanka. He now made himself small and waited on a tree till evening came. Then he adopted the form of a cat and searched everywhere for Sita, in the palaces of Ravana, but in vain. At last he came to the Asoka Wood and there he saw a pale-faced, sweet, sad woman, in soiled garments and deprived of her jewels. Her eyes were filled with tears, and feebly she walked to the very tree on which Hanuman sat.

A kind old Rakshasi came to Sita and consoled her. She had driven away the guards, warning them to be kind, as she had had a dream in which she saw Sita triumphant and Ravana slain. After saying this she too went away and Sita was alone. This was Hanuman's opportunity. He began gently to chant in Sanskrit the story of Sita's capture by Ravana. Then he told her that he was a monkey and he had found her and brought her news from Rama. Sita looked up in the tree and saw a monkey sitting on a branch over her

head holding a ring in his hand. He jumped down and standing in front of her with uplifted hands, bent low before her. This was surely a very clever and polite monkey, and *he* chanted her story! Sita wondered!! Hanuman then described Rama in order to assure her, that he really knew him, and gave her Rama's signet ring, which he had given him for Sita if Hanuman should find her. Sita, with delight, pressed the ring to her lips. Could her heart bear all this joy, after the pain she had endured? Ten months she had grieved and in two more months she would be slain, if Rama would not come in time! All this she told Hanuman, and she gave him a jewel for Rama, which she had hidden in her cloth, and she urged him to return quickly to Rama and ask him to take her out of Ravana's power.

Hanuman was so very happy that he had found Sita, he thought he ought to have some fun before he returned to India. His monkey nature came out so strongly, that he could not resist the temptation to play some tricks on Ravana, whom he hated, because he had made Sita and Rama so unhappy. So he began to destroy the Asoka Grove, except the part where Sita lived. After looking around, well pleased with his work of destruction, he, taking on again his huge monkey form, shouted out defiance to Ravana, who at once sent out an army against him. Hanuman destroyed the whole army, and with one bound he was on the top of Ravana's great Temple, wrenched a pillar from it and set the Temple on fire.



“Sita looked up in the tree and saw a Monkey.....holding a ring
in his hand” (pp. 31, 32.)

Another army was sent against him, which he also destroyed. But there were Rakshasas in Lanka who had magical powers, and one of Ravana's sons was the chief of them. He shot an arrow at Hanuman, which took away his power of movement without killing him. For the present he was quite helpless, and had to think out a plan to get out of this condition. So he pretended to be very miserable and asked them to take him before Ravana. Full of glee the Rakshasas thought they had conquered their great enemy; they bound him with cords of bark and cotton and carried him thus before Ravana. In answer to a question why he had come, he said that "he was an Envoy sent by Rama to Ravana to ask him to set Sita free."

Ravana of course did not listen to this request and wanted to have Hanuman killed. His son, however, warned him that it was a universal law that Envoys could not be killed; so in punishment they wrapped cloth dipped in oil, round Hanuman's tail and set it on fire. Thus they carried him around the city, thinking that they had him safely bound. But suddenly he burst his bonds, wrenched the noses and ears of those who carried him, and jumped from house to house and palace to palace, setting everything on fire that he touched with his burning tail. And all Lanka was ablaze. Then he quenched the fire of his tail in the Ocean, assured himself that Sita was not hurt, and bounded back over the Ocean to the

Indian shore, where his companions were anxiously waiting for him.

[“ It must have looked very funny ” cried the girls who had listened with laughing eyes to this part of the story. “ How the big Hanuman jumped from house to house with his burning tail.” “ How frightened the people of Lanka must have been !”

“ Oh, I hope he won’t come here ” cried one little girl. “ I am afraid.” All laughed heartily.

“ Don’t be afraid little one,” said the mother, drawing the little girl to her. “ This happened thousands of years ago and I’m sure he will not come to you.”

Very much amused the little crowd dispersed.]

CHAPTER X.

THE MONKEY BRIDGE.

All the monkeys sent to the South in search of Sita now returned to Rama.

Unspeakable was his joy when he heard Sita was alive and waiting for him. He pressed Sita’s jewel, which she had worn so many times in the happy days, to his heart, and embraced Hanuman as a reward for all that he had done.

The army of monkeys, which had been increased by a host of bears, started at once on their march to the Coast of the Indian Ocean. Arrived there the difficulty arose how to cross the Ocean to Lanka, for Hanuman was the

only one who could do that without a bridge. One of the brothers of Ravana, Bibhishana, who had left him, because Ravana had not followed his advice to release Sita, had come to Rama's camp as a friend. As he was acquainted with the difficulties of crossing the Ocean he advised Rama, first to ask permission of the Ocean and then to build a bridge over it. The monkey, Nale, the son of the mighty Deva Architect, Vishvakarma, who was very skilful in the building of bridges, had to undertake this difficult task. All the monkeys and bears were set to work. They had to take on their huge forms, for it was no easy task to loosen and roll huge rocks into the Ocean. This was the work for the monkeys. And oh! how they jumped and pulled and rolled and plunged the small mountains into the sea. The bears had to fell big trees and lay them over the rocks. And then again the big monkeys filled up the spaces with crags and stones and sand, and the bridge building went on very fast, for they worked for dear life. Hanuman was always the foremost one, and he always carried the biggest loads. Besides, he was an excellent jester, and when some of the weaker workers felt tired, he made such a lot of fun, that they were soon ready to go on again with their work. So Hanuman made himself very useful and he became the favourite of the whole army. On they worked, and only think! they did it so quickly, that in five days the bridge reached the shore of Lanka. And it was such a firm and strong bridge that the whole

army of monkeys and bears, with Rama, Lakshmana and Bibhishana crossed the Ocean safely and stepped on Lanka's shore, where the unhappy Sita had been mourning and waiting for over ten weary months.

They marched at once to the capital and surrounded it. As spies had already carried the news to Ravana of the approach of the strange army, he fortified his capital and awaited their attack.

["Oh, mother dear, was the bridge which the monkeys built, Adam's Bridge?" asked one of the listeners quite excitedly!

"Yes, dear," "What remains now of the monkey's bridge is called Adam's Bridge." "At the time when they built it long, long ago, it was named 'Rama's Bridge.'"

"There is yet an Island near Adam's Bridge, which is called Ramasvaram, on which a beautiful Temple has been built over an old Shrine of Siva, which was supposed to have been erected by Rama when he was crossing the bridge."

"Here the people talk yet of the brave deeds of Rama and the faithfulness of Sita, and thousands of Hindus make pilgrimages there up to this day."]

CHAPTER XI,

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

All were ready to begin the war, but the monkey-king Sugriva had to play a little trick

before he got into a serious frame of mind. He saw Ravana, attired in gorgeous garments, standing before one of the gates of his capital. So he jumped over to him, bowed down very politely and suddenly dashed off Ravana's jewelled crown. A hand-to-hand struggle commenced, in which Sugriva played all kinds of pranks with Ravana. Then, after tiring each other out, Sugriva bowed down again politely and jumped back to his army, where he was received with a great deal of amusement.

Now the real attack commenced. The monkeys and bears armed with trees and rocks rammed the gates of the city. They soon crashed them in and a hand-to-hand struggle began in the streets and outside the walls, which lasted the whole day and through the night. Both parties fought very bravely, but Rama's army would have gained the victory then, if one of Ravana's sons had not had the magic power to make himself invisible. Thus he covered Rama and Lakshmana with such a shower of arrows, that they fell down senseless.

Shouting out his victory, the Rakshasa Prince returned to his palace and reported to Ravana that he had slain the two leaders of the besieging army. The fight ceased for a time !

Quickly Ravana sent his air-car for Sita, to show her that this time Rama really was dead. She was brought to the battle-field. Looking at the senseless body of her beloved Rama,

who was lying at the side of his faithful brother Lakshmana, both pierced with arrows, she broke out into loud lamentations, wanting to die herself now that Rama was dead ! But the army did not believe in Rama's death, and one of the Wise Ones in the army consoled her by saying that both the brothers would revive. So she was taken back to the Asoka Woods, where she spent her time in prayer.

The whole army surrounded the two brothers, waiting silently for them to wake up from their swoon.

At last Rama awoke, and seeing Lakshmana apparently dead on the ground he wanted to die himself, for, he said, a brother like Lakshmana could never again be found in the whole world.

"By Sita's loss," Rama cried, "my heart was *pierced*, by Lakshmana's death my heart is *broken*. Stand back, my brave army ! and let me die at his side."

But hark ! A rush of wings and a flash of lightning ! What was that ? A mighty bird came swiftly through the air, sent by the God Vishnu to save his sons. He, the faithful messenger of the God, the enemy of the Rakshasas, the Serpent Race, he could heal the wounds which the Rakshasa Prince had made with his poisoned arrows. He pulled out the arrows with which the two brothers were covered. The wounds closed at once and healed and both stood up twice as strong as before.

Then, the great bird with pleasure shining in his eyes, caressed the brothers, spread

out his wings and disappeared as quickly as he had come.

There was great rejoicing in Rama's camp !

Ravana however, who had believed his greatest enemies dead, called his army together and sent out his best generals to recommence the fight at once.

All these brave leaders were slain by the two strong brothers and their army, and now Ravana himself came to fight with Rama.

He came like the God of War in his mighty car to crush Rama, but he found out very soon that this was not such an easy task as he had expected.

A fierce fight began, in which both showed superhuman strength.

At last Ravana was almost conquered, and the war would have ended then, if Rama, in his compassion, had not asked Ravana to go back to his capital and rest till next morning.

Ravana, although furious at this generous offer, accepted it, thinking to ask his giant brother Kumbhakarna to slay Rama the next day.

CHAPTER XII.

KUMBHAKARNA.

Kumbhakarna, the brother of Ravana, was such an immense giant, that he looked like a small mountain.

He had the habit of going to sleep for months at a time, and this was a relief to everybody, for when he was awake he used to eat such a quantity, that it was very hard to provide him with sufficient food. When he was needed for something, he had to be waked up, by beating him and making such a lot of noise, that it sounded through the whole of the Capital of Lanka, and everybody then knew that Kumbhakarna had to be waked up out of his sleep.

This Rakshasa-Monster had not heard anything of what was going on in Lanka at that time as he was asleep, and so they had to wake him up, as Ravana wanted him to fight with Rama and kill him.

After they had succeeded in rousing him, he yawned so heavily that the whole capital shook, and he asked very angrily why they had waked him up so hurriedly. He first devoured some goats and buffaloes, and a heap of rice several feet high, and then Ravana told him his trouble and asked him to fight with Rama.

“I will kill them all,” the giant said, getting up lazily and standing up in his full height.

Like a walking mountain he appeared on the battle-field, and the whole army of monkeys and bears fled in terror !

Such a being they had never seen before in their lives. Only Hanuman kept at the side

of Rama and Lakshmana and tried to make plans how to get at this giant.

Called back by their leaders the monkeys and bears assaulted Kumbhakarna on all sides. But with his huge club he killed many of them and they began to fear that they could not overpower him. Then Lakshmana approached him and showed such skill in his attack that the giant could not help admiring his strength.

But in the end he would not have been able to withstand the immense club of the giant, if Rama had not come to his help. Rama bid his brother leave the Man-Mountain for him, and at last Kumbhakarna found his master. A fierce duel commenced, but very soon Rama completely overpowered the giant, who had never been conquered before. Rama first struck off his right arm, then his left arm and his head. Now the Man-Mountain fell down dead, blocking up with his body the northern gate of Lanka.

[“How brave and how strong Rama must have been to kill such a giant as Kumbhakarna,” cried the girls.

“Now Ravana surely will get frightened.”
 “Well, my children, the war will soon be over now” answered the relater of the story, “and you will hear how it ended.”]

CHAPTER XIII.

STRUGGLE BETWEEN DAY & NIGHT.

Ravana was almost in despair when he heard that even his invincible brother Kumbhakarna

had been killed, and he prepared to go himself for a last struggle with Rama.

But his strongest son, very learned in magic, offered to take his place and went forth on the battle-field. He fought very bravely and almost killed Rama by making himself invisible and showering fiery arrows on him. Lakshmana came to Rama's help and assailed the Rakshasa Prince just when he was preparing a sacrifice through which he would have been altogether unconquerable. Lakshmana came on him so unexpectedly, that he had not time to make himself invisible, and he killed him after a fierce struggle. So, another of Ravana's strong sons was dead.

When Ravana heard of this, he raged with anger and he rushed to the Asoka Wood with the intention to kill Sita first and then to fight with Rama. One of his ministers interfered and stopped him, telling him that his reputation would be lost if he killed a defenceless woman. So he returned to his capital, where he heard such a wailing and weeping by the Rakshasas, who bemoaned the loss of their husbands, fathers and brothers, that he determined at once to end this struggle. He jumped into his war-chariot and hurried to the battle-field in his wrath and now the struggle between the Lords of Light and Darkness began.

First, Ravana rushed at Lakshmana and almost killed him ; but he was revived by a magic drug, which Hanuman procured. Then

he covered Rama with a storm of arrows, while he was attending to Lakshmana. But as soon as Lakshmana revived Rama turned to Ravana, and now a fearful battle was fought between the two heroes. All other fighting stopped, and the two armies watched with anxiety the issue.

Like Gods of Light and Darkness the two mighty warriors stood in their war-chariots. Their arrows flashed to and fro like lightning. Equal in strength as it seemed, they fought with supernatural vigour. Their cars were shattered. They jumped into new ones, and rushed like two thunder-clouds against each other. Seven days and seven nights this fearful struggle lasted. Once Ravana turned back bewildered, but he came back to renew his attack.

Rama was chanting the great Hymn to the Sun. Then Ravana shot shafts at Rama that turned into fiery serpents, and Rama met them with arrows that changed into birds which destroyed the serpents. So they fought on and on. At last Rama raised his mightiest weapon, a gift of Brahma, himself. He launched it at Ravana—and the Lord of Darkness fell headless to the ground. *The war was ended!* Light had conquered!

Ravana's brother, Bibhishana, who had been an onlooker, but not a fighter in the war, asked for Ravana's body, which Rama readily consented to let him have, and Ravana, the great King of Darkness, was cremated with all the honours of a King and warrior.

After the funeral rites were performed, Rama installed Bibhishana as King of Lanka. And *now* Rama made preparations to meet Sita !

[“ Oh, what a war that must have been, which could last for seven days and seven nights !” cried out the girls, with a sigh of relief that it was over. “ I do not like “ wars,” said little Leelavattie; “ I am glad that this war is over, and I hope that poor Sita will now soon be delivered from her misery. Did she know that Rama had conquered ?”]

“ Do not be in such a hurry, my little girl ; I will tell you to-morrow what became of Sita.”

“ I wish to-morrow would come soon, cried the eager little girl and ran away.”]

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST MEETING OF RAMA AND SITA.

Looking very sad, Rama called Hanuman and told him to go and find Sita. The faithful monkey went joyfully on this errand, and brought Sita the news of Ravana's death and Rama's victory. Radiant was her sweet face when she heard this glorious piece of news ! At last, after so many months of trouble, she was to see him again, for whom she had endured all manner of insults among awful surroundings. Sweetly she asked Hanuman to ask Rama when she could meet him again.

Hanuman returned with her message to Rama, who was in deep meditation at the time. With a deep sigh, Rama bade the new King of Lanka to bring Sita to him, clad in royal garments.

Sita bathed, clothed herself regally and adorned herself with jewels as her beloved Rama had told her to do. In a palanquin she was taken to Rama, who was again in deep meditation. He stood gravely, like a King and like a statue there ! The army wanted to retire, but Rama asked them to stay and be witness to their first meeting. He looked so sad and joyless that Lakshmana was troubled with fear lest this would be something else than the first joyous meeting of husband and wife.

Led by the new Rakshasa-King Bibhis-hana, Sita, with a thin worn face, her eyes filled with tears, looked wistfully at Rama. But Rama, instead of meeting her joyfully, spoke solemnly : “ ‘ I have conquered thy foe, “and I have slain with the same blow my dis-
“honour and my enemy. But long hast thou
“lived in the palace of Ravana, touched by
“him, and gazed at by him with lustful eyes.
“Go thou wherever thou wilt. Settle where
“thou mayest please.’ ” Was that Rama’s wel-
come to his faithful wife, who had withstood
all insults, all threats of Ravana and his
Rakshasis ? Conscious of her stainless purity,
she was at first almost overcome by the shock
these words gave her. But then she raised
her tear-stained eyes to Rama and said : “ ‘ Why

“speak such hard words, oh Warrior, as common man to common woman? I swear by my own character! My heart has always belonged to thee, and I shall be ruined forever if thou dost not believe me!” Rama was silent.

Then turning to Lakshmana she asked him to make her funeral pyre, as she would not wish to live any longer after being told by Rama of her unfaithfulness to him. Lakshmana, with despair in his heart, fulfilled her command.

Sita then walked round her husband in mute farewell without pleading for mercy, and then she spoke to the fire before her :

“ ‘Oh Fire, the witness of the people! do *thou* protect me, as my heart has never wavered from Rama. As he deems me vile, who am pure, do *thou*, the witness of the people, protect me on all sides!’ ”

Then she entered the roaring flames of the funeral pyre. Lakshmana and the surrounding army moaned. Rama sank again into meditation. He knew all the time that she was pure. But he knew also, that if he took her back without purification, he would set a bad example to all his people, and that he would put his love for her above the good of his people. So he let her prove her purity to all the world by the fire-test.

He communed with the Gods in his meditation, and he implored them to protect her. And she was protected! Agni, himself, the God of Fire, came to her in the flames

and she remained unhurt. The flames divided and she shone out of them radiant and pure. Then she stepped down from her funeral pyre, shining like a Goddess ! She was now purified in the eyes of all the surrounding friends and enemies !

Thus purified, Rama could clasp her to his heart with heavenly joy. And Rama and Sita were united in happiness once more !

[“ Oh ! I am so glad that darling Sita did not get burned in the fire !” cried out a little girl with tears in her eyes.

“ I was so much afraid the flames would eat her up. But of course, she was so pure and good, that they could not hurt her !”

“ I think,” said another girl, “ that Rama was very cruel to Sita ; he ought to have believed her without the fire test.”

“ You see, my dear child, Rama himself believed in her purity, but his people would not have accepted her as their Queen, after living twelve months in the land of the Rakshasas, if she had not been purified.”

“ Now there is very little more to tell you about Rama and Sita ; and that I will tell you to-morrow evening.”]

CHAPTER XV.

HOME AT LAST !

After Rama had asked the Gods to restore to life all the monkeys and bears, who had so

faithfully helped him to conquer the hosts of the Rakshasas, he entered Ravana's splendid air-car with Sita and Lakshmana. Followed by the hosts of his army, they started back on their way to Ayodhya. The fourteen years of their exile were now over. Passing over the monkey land, the wives of the brave monkeys, at Sita's request, joined them. Thus, in a great procession they came near Ayodhya, to the place where Bharata, ever faithful to Rama, had lived all these fourteen years as an Ascetic.

As promised, he had put the royal umbrella over Rama's golden sandals, and very joyfully he gave them over to Rama. Under the royal umbrella and with the golden sandals on his feet, accompanied by Sita, all his brothers, and the hosts of the monkeys with their wives, Rama entered the jubilant city.

Thousands of rejoicing citizens were gathered in the streets, and they conducted the visitors to the three old Queens, who thanked the Gods for allowing them to live long enough to see Rama return in such splendour.

Rama took his place on the throne, and the wise Vasishtha, Rama's old teacher, seated Lakshmana and Sita on either side of him. He then anointed Rama as King, and the jewelled crown of his race was placed on his head. Rama wanted Lakshmana to share the throne, but this most faithful of brothers declined this high honour. He only wanted to be the attendant of his brother as he had been all his life.

Rich rewards were given to the whole army, and Sita herself gladdened the heart of the happy Hanuman with a splendid necklace of pearls, the gift of Rama to her on the coronation day, because he was the one who had given her the first comfort in all her troubles.

Rama reigned for a very long time. It was such a reign of happiness and peace as had never been known before.

Rama became the Hero-King of the Indian people and he is remembered so up to now. And Sita, the example of devotion and faithfulness, is ever praised by young and old in the present day, as she was in the olden times.

Thus ends the story of Rama and Sita, composed by Valmiki, the Divine Singer, in the days of old.*

[The little crowd around the mother was very attentive and quiet till the story was ended. Then the children broke out in loud thanks, and declared they had never heard such a nice story before.]

[The next evening, when the children were gathered together again, they were very curious to know what story would be told, now that the "Ramayana" was finished, and a good many whispered suggestions went round the circle.]

* The above story is a shortened and simplified version of lectures on the Ramayana, delivered to the students of the "Central Hindu College," Benares, by its Founder, Mrs. Annie Besant (M. M. H.)

"I wonder whether the next story will be as pretty as the Ramayana," they asked each other.

"Well, my dear children, I will try my best, but I am afraid the other stories will not be quite as fascinating. But as the following stories have more to do with your own Ceylon, you ought to take great interest in them. I will have to tell you the story of the grandmother of the *first* King of Lanka, and this story will yet be Pre-History. But before I begin with it, I want you children to know what the Sinhalese and Tamils of to-day say about Sita, who spent some unhappy time in the Lanka of old. It is really wonderful to think that the old, old story has not been forgotten yet."

You remember, I hope, that I told you, before I began the story of the "Ramayana," that there were places here in Ceylon, named in memory of Sita. About such places as "Sita-Eliya and Sita-Weva" I will tell you something now.

"There is a little village, between Nuwara-Eliya and Hakgala, which is called Sita-Eliya (Sita's Light). It has received its name from an old local tradition, which says that long, long ago, there lived in that place a beautiful Indian Princess with the name of Sita-Devi. She was a prisoner of the Rakshasa-King Ravana, who had carried her away by force from India, and stolen her from her husband King Ramachandra.

Sita-Devi was always very sad, for she longed to get back to India. But she was very closely watched by the Rakshasis and nobody was allowed to talk to her, and there was no chance for her to return to India. The Devas, in order to protect her against any evil which might befall her, put a lamp on the top of a mountain, which burned every night, and which no rain nor storm could put out. Thus she knew that she was protected and that gave her some comfort. The rock, on which that lamp had been lighted, is yet called *Pan-tibugalla* (i.e. the stone where the lamp was put). The lamp itself has vanished long ago, but very old residents say that their forefathers told them that they had sometimes seen a light on the mountain.

In Sita-Eliya, there is left a very old ruin of a Shrine of Shiva. The images are weather-beaten and broken, and there is no roof left to protect the small enclosure in which they are. But the Tamils come there at times, decorate the little place, light candles and burn incense. Just behind this old Shrine there is a beautiful sparkling brook. The water seems just to spring out of the rock and one cannot find its real source. Here, tradition says, Sita-Devi used to bathe ! At first, when she came to Lanka, there was no brook at this place, and King Ravana used to send Sita-Devi water for her bath. But Sita would not even accept water from her captor. She rather wanted to die and in her despair she struck her head against the hard rock ! And lo ! the rock split and a

spring of beautiful clear water came out of it. Now, she could bathe without using the water sent by the one person in the world whom she hated. This spring is up to the present day called Sita-Weva.

In a rock near here, you see round holes, which look almost like the foot-prints of elephants. It is said that Ramachandra sent some of his elephants to search for Sita, and they trampled on the rock and left their foot-prints on it. Sita-Devi, however, was carried off by Ravana's elephant, which went into the rock that closed behind her.

Not far from Sita-Weva is a broad flat stone, which is called "Kondagalla" (Hair-stone). Here the old residents say that Sita-Devi combed her hair after she had bathed in Sita-Weva.

It is said, that in some parts of the woods around Sita-Eliya the villagers find pieces of some vegetable stuff called Sita-Keta which taste like rice when roasted. It is used for medicine.

The villagers also say, that these Sita-Keta are the grains of the rice which Sita-Devi threw away because they were sent by Ravana. She would rather live on roots and fruits than touch anything that King Ravana sent her.

Several miles of land between Nuwara-Eliya and Hakgala are covered with a layer of deep-black soil, sometimes up to a foot in thickness, over the usual red kabook earth. This is quite a peculiar fact, for all the land around has only red soil. Here, it is said, used to be the Asoka Woods where Sita-Devi lived. The

Monkey-God Hanuman came over here to search for Sita-Devi. He found her, and to pick up a quarrel with Ravana he destroyed the Asoka Woods (except a small part where Sita-Devi lived), and this black earth is left from the burnt down forest. So you see, my children, even Hanuman with his burning tail is not as yet forgotten in the Nuwara-Eliya District.

Near Kandy there is still a Temple dedicated to the God Bibhishana. It is erected in memory of King Ravana's brother, Bibhishana, the one who was a friend of King Rama and who became King of Lanka, after Ravana had been conquered by Rama.

Such then are some of the local traditions about Sita in Ceylon. What wonder then that in India, in the small villages, the children almost imagine that Sita has just passed away and that the Rakshasas are still living in Lanka! And when a Sinhalese comes over there, they stare at him and wonder why the Rakshasas of Lanka look so human and so good-natured. You see, my children, *there* the family *guru* (teacher) tells the "Ramayana" so enthusiastically and so naturally at the present time that the Indian children in the villages forget that Sita and Rama and Lakshmana lived thousands of years ago."

"But I see, my children, that it is too late to begin my new story to-night. You must wait for it till to-morrow, when I will tell you the story of Suppa-Devi, the grandmother of Vijaya, the first King of Lanka."]

STORY II.

**THE ANCESTORS OF THE FIRST
KING OF LANKA.**

CHAPTER I.

THE LION'S BRIDE.

In India, in the land of Vangal (the present Bengal), with the capital of Vanga, there lived long, long ago, it must have been about two thousand five hundred years ago, a King, whose principal Queen was a daughter of the King of Kalinga. He had a great many children, of whom his daughter Suppa-Devi was the most beautiful.

But to the great distress of the good King and Queen, their daughter was not as virtuous as she was beautiful. Contrary to the good old Indian custom she was always eager to be in the company of young men, so that her parents, sadly disappointed with her bad manners, locked her up in a room and did not allow anybody to talk to her, except themselves and her brothers and sisters. Suppa-Devi did not like this treatment at all, and whenever she could, she used to run away from the room in which she was kept, in order to have her own way. The Queen, who felt sorry that her daughter had to be locked up, consulted a wise Brahmana and asked him whether it was really necessary to treat Suppa-Devi so strictly. The wise Brahmana, consulting her horoscope, shook his head and

said : “ It is very necessary to shut this wild girl up, or rather to lock her up in a room very securely, for, if she escapes, she will become the wife of a lion.”

When the King and the Queen heard this peculiar prophecy they became quite alarmed, and Suppa-Devi was locked up more securely than before ; for, her parents naturally did not want this prophecy to come true. Suppa-Devi was very angry at being kept thus in confinement, and she thought night and day how best she could escape to have her own way again.

At last, she succeeded one night in slipping out of her prison. She fled quickly through the gardens and out of the town, where she found a caravan resting on its way to Lala (Maghada), in the north of India. She implored the headman of the caravan to take her to her relatives in Lala. She told him that she was treated so badly by her husband that she had to run away. The leader believed her story, took pity on her, and allowed her to join the caravan, which was to resume its journey early next morning. Suppa-Devi was very glad that she had thus escaped from her prison, and when her parents found out that she had fled, she was already far away from Vanga, and they never found her again.

While the caravan was crossing the desert, and not very far from the end of its journey, a lion came running towards the caravan, and the terrified travellers ran away as quickly as their legs could carry them. Only Suppa-Devi

did not seem to be afraid, but waited till the lion came near her. Then looking at him she said without fear: "Stately king of the animals, I am sure you will not hurt me, for I am not afraid of you. Your eyes look kind and I know we shall be friends."

At once the lion became quite gentle and lay down at her feet, looking at her with his large beautiful eyes. She caressed him and he seemed pleased. Then, suddenly rising, he took her on his back and carried her off to his den.

Suppa-Devi lived with him there for many years. He was always gentle to her and brought her food, but he closed up the den with a big rock whenever he went out, so that she could not escape.*

Two children (twins) were born to them, a boy and a girl. They looked like other children, only with this difference, that their hands and feet showed leonine parentage, being very hairy. She named the boy Sinhabahu (lion-armed) and the girl Sinhavali.

When the children were about sixteen years old, Sinhabahu asked his mother one day "Why is it, that there is such a difference between my father and ourselves?"

Suppa-Devi now told him her whole story, and Sinhabahu, after hearing it, became very

* Nobody knows the real meaning of this story. But it is said that the captor of Suppa-Devi was a wild warrior, who, on account of his great strength and bravery, was called Sinha, the Lion.

thoughtful and begged her to let them all three leave the den and go back to human beings.

He tried to lift the big rock, which was left at the entrance of the den, and when he found that he was strong enough to lift it and even carry it with ease quite a distance, he realized his lion strength.

He made up his mind at once to escape from the den taking his mother and sister with him, as soon as the opportunity should occur.

A few days after this, when the lion left the den again, Sinhabahu pushed aside the big rock, which closed the entrance, took his mother on his right shoulder and his sister on his left and wandered forth into the wilderness.

He came thus, after several hours' walk into a village, where the inhabitants were celebrating a great paddy-harvest festival. The whole village, out of curiosity, came round them, when they entered it, for their appearance was peculiar indeed. The youth bearing on his shoulders two women, clad only in leaves—this was something that they had never seen before.

Prince Anura, minister and standard-bearer of the King of Vangal, saw them thus, and he enquired where they came from. Suppa-Devi answered:

“We are inhabitants of the wilderness, please give us some food, for we are hungry.”

Anura had some cooked rice put on some leaves to give them, and lo ! When Suppa-Devi

touched the leaves with her hands they at once turned into gold plates ! As Anura saw this, he became very thoughtful ; it reminded him of a prophecy which said, that he would marry the woman in whose hands leaves became gold ! He asked Suppa-Devi to tell him her story ; this she did, and he found out that she was the daughter of his father's younger sister. He at once took Suppa-Devi and her children home with him, and in course of time he really made her his wife.

Suppa-Devi was still quite beautiful, and through all her sufferings she had become very gentle and good. As Anura did not tell Suppa-Devi's life-story to anyone, she was accepted and treated by the people like a princess. Her parents had died, and the present King of Vangal did not know her story. So she lived quite happily in her new home and was very thankful to be among human beings again.

CHAPTER II.

SINHABAHU.

Meanwhile the poor lion, who had lost his whole family, was in great distress, as you may imagine. He roamed about in the land of Lal, destroying everything that came in his way, searching for those who had disappeared. The frightened people came to the King in their distress and begged him to have the lion killed. The King, who could not find anybody brave enough to fight the lion, placed one thousand

pieces of money on the back of an elephant and proclaimed that the captor of the lion should get this money as a reward. Still no one dared to attack the lion. Then the King offered two thousand and at last three thousand pieces of money, but without success.

Sinhabahu was very eager to earn this reward, but twice his mother Suppa-Devi held him back from undertaking this enterprise. On the third occasion, without consulting his mother, he presented himself to the King and offered to free the land from the ravages of the lion.

The King was very much pleased with the brave youth and said to him :

“When you have destroyed the lion, you shall not only have the money promised, but also the land which the lion is now laying waste shall be yours.”

Sinhabahu forgot, in his ambition, that he ought not to kill the lion, but started at once to find him, knowing the way to his den. He hastened to the spot and entered the den.

The lion recognised Sinhabahu and came towards him gently ; but Sinhabahu shot an arrow at him with the intention of killing him. The lion, however, was not killed by it, as he was protected, on account of the merit earned by his kindness towards Sinhabahu. The arrow came back and fell at the feet of the young warrior. A second arrow met with the same fate. But when Sinhabahu shot a third arrow, the lion lost his self-possession, thereby

destroying the charm which preserved his life. The arrow pierced him and he fell dead at the feet of Prince Sinhabahu.

Sinhabahu took the head of the lion and brought it to Vanga to present it to the King. But the King had died just seven days before this, and there was no King in Vangal at the time.

The people, who were very much delighted to have got rid of the dangerous King of the animals, asked Sinhabahu to accept the crown of the land of Vangal, as the late King had no son and heir. They found out that Sinhabahu was really the great-nephew of the late King and his mother the niece. So they assembled in a big gathering, hailing him as the "deliverer of the country" and proclaiming him as the new King.

Sinhabahu accepted the crown of Vangal, but he did not keep it for himself but he gave it to Anura, the husband of his mother, who was very glad to become King of the land.

Sinhabahu himself left for Lal, his native country. There he built a city which he called Sinhapura, and in the jungle he founded a number of villages. He also cultivated and irrigated the land, which in a short time became prosperous. Then he built himself a palace, brought his sister Sinhavali to Lal and married her. He reigned very wisely for a long time.

Sinhabahu and Sinhavali became the ancestors of the Sinhalese people in Lanka, for it

was their eldest son Vijaya who landed and took possession of Lanka.

The Sinhalese are yet called the "Sons of the Lion," and they have kept the symbol of the "lion" (sinha) till now.

The throne of one of the later Sinhalese Kings, Kirti Nissanka (about 1200 A.D.), was cut out of stone in the shape of a lion, and it is now preserved in the Colombo Museum.

["This story is not quite as pretty as the Ramayana," said the children. "Still we thank you very much for telling it to us. We really ought to know it, as Sinhabahu and Sinhavali were our ancestors,"

"To-morrow we will begin the real History of Ceylon, will we not, dear mother?" asked Yasodhara.

"Yes, my children, to-morrow I shall tell you the story of the First King of Ceylon."]

STORY III.

THE FIRST KING OF LANKA.

CHAPTER I.

VIJAYA'S LANDING.

In the Plains of India, the sun burns hot all the year round and the moon shines so brightly that one might think the sun, before setting, had turned back once more to give the moon a double flood of light. There, in India, the moon makes such a beautiful silvery sheen on the palm-leaves and makes the shadows of the wide-spreading tamarind trees so black, that the shining little Devas and Devis, after playing in the bright moon-light, can hide themselves quickly in this deep shadow when a son of the earth passes by unawares.

In this land of mystery and solemn beauty, there lived long, long ago, perhaps two thousand four hundred years ago, a King with the name of Sinhabahu. The name of his Queen was Sinhavali, and she was really his sister. (You remember who they were, don't you my children?) They had many children, of whom the eldest was named Vijaya and the second Sumitha.

Vijaya was a very strong, healthy boy, but I am sorry to say, he was already in his youth a very wilful and naughty boy, who gave a great deal of trouble to his parents. As he was, however, very strong and also very clever, his father made him sub-King, while he was still

ver young ; for the poor King needed a great deal of help to improve his country, which consisted still to a great extent of jungle and swamps. These he wanted to turn into a fertile and useful land, so that his faithful subjects should have a happier life. Vijaya was very clever in supervising the workmen and showing them how to fell trees and remove their roots. He understood also how to turn swamps into tanks, which the monsoon rains were to fill with water, so that the poor people could irrigate their paddy fields in the dry season. In this way they could have two paddy harvests each year and need not starve. These poor people were really very easily satisfied, for when they had their rice, boiled in water and some salt with it and some roots or fruits, then they were quite happy.

Now this state of affairs would have been quite nice, if Vijaya had attended to his business faithfully. But he got very tired of it and commenced a great deal of wild play.

He gathered a crowd of youths round him, who were just as mischievous as himself. They dressed up like wild men, frightened the women and children by pretending to want to rob them and carry them away, and they did many other foolish and unlawful things. The poor villagers came running to King Sinhabahu and complained bitterly about his disobedient and mischievous son and asked him to forbid this cruel play. *Three* times the King pardoned his son, because he promised to become better, but when he always fell back

again into his former bad ways, Sinhabahu got very angry. He had half the hair and the beards of Vijaya and his companions shaved off and had these men put on board a ship, which was then sent adrift on the Ocean. Then the angry King shouted to them : "Vijaya, go and find yourself another country. I cannot govern in harmony with such an unruly son as you are. Besides, I have other sons, who will behave better than you and will help me more." Thus Vijaya was sent away from his own country, India. The wives and children of Vijaya's companions were also put on ships and they landed in different parts of India, where they were kindly welcomed, and where they remained and settled. Vijaya and seven hundred companions landed at the port of Supparaka (Jambudvipa), but they were driven away again by the people there, on account of their bad behaviour, and for the second time they were adrift on the Ocean. This was really a very sad thing now. They were carried by the currents further and further away from the coast. Sea-monsters surrounded them, very eager to swallow them up, and the wind was beginning to howl dreadfully. They were afraid that they would never reach land again, and they began to repent of their unlawful deeds. Now they made up their minds to become better men, if they could only find some land. They drifted on for many days and nights. Their provisions came to an end and they were very hungry, very sad, and very repentant. At last one morning, when the sun was



“Vijaya was the first to land, and he put his hands down on the earth, etc.” (p. 65.)

just rising over the sea, it shone on something high that seemed to rest on the water. When they came a little nearer they saw that it was a mountain. (It was our Adam's-Peak which they saw.) After a few more hours they saw in the far distance something green and they discovered that high palm-trees were waving their slender branches to them as a welcome. How glad they were you can imagine! Soon they were near enough to the land to be able, half swimming and half wading, holding their weapons over their heads to reach the shore, where they fell on their knees thanking the Gods for their deliverance from the great dangers of the sea and from starvation.

Vijaya was the first to land, and he put his hands down on the earth as if bowing down and said solemnly: "I take possession of this land, and I swear that I will be a father to my subjects and a good ruler over this country."

When the palms of his hands looked copper-coloured from the red soil, he called the land "Tambapanni" (copper-coloured). Now they wandered to and fro on the beach, which looked very beautiful. Tall coconut-palms and wide-branching trees were growing quite near the sea, and white sea-lilies nodded at them kindly. Luckily they found some coconuts on the ground, which had been thrown down by some monkeys. They refreshed themselves with them, so that their thirst and hunger were satisfied. Then they took counsel what they should do. They thought it best

to go one by one into the jungle with their weapons, the bow and arrow, and try to hunt for some game. When they were looking around they saw, sitting under a palm-tree, a reverend monk, who was absorbed in meditation. They were wondering where he came from and well they might, as he was indeed a messenger of the Lord Buddha himself, who just this very day had left his mortal body behind him. In the assembly of the Devas he had spoken to Sakka, the King of the Devas, thus : "To-day Vijaya, the son of Sinhabahu, has landed with seven hundred followers in Lanka. I know that my religion will be established in Lanka and therefore I ask you to protect them and Lanka." Sakka assigned for protection of Lanka the Deva *Uppalavanna* (Vishnu), and it was he who, in the garb of a Devotee, appeared to Vijaya and his followers. They approached him reverently, and the monk spoke to them as follows : "Hail ! Vijaya. I have been sent here by the Gods to protect you and your followers if you will govern this beautiful Island wisely and justly. But as the Yakkhas and Nagas, who are living here, might try to injure you, I will give you all a holy charm, so that they cannot harm you." Saying this he sprinkled water out of his jug on them and tied a thread round their left arms. When they were prostrating themselves before him in order to thank him, he disappeared suddenly. They wondered what had become of him, but they could not find him anywhere.

["Please, dear mother, were the Yakkhas and

and Nagas, who were living in Lanka at that time, the descendants of the Rakshasas, who lived in Lanka at the time of Ravana? asked one of the older pupils of the name of Amara-vattie?"

"Well, dear, I suppose they were! Anyhow they seem to have had some of the same characteristics as the Rakshasas had, as you will see in the story to follow. But I do not think that they were as powerful as the old Rakshasas used to be. With the death of Ravana and very many of his subjects their power was broken."]

CHAPTER II.

ADVENTURES AT THE YAKKHA TANK.

As agreed before, the first of the followers of Vijaya went into the jungle alone, and after having walked on for a few minutes he saw a brown dog coming towards him. It sat down before him, wagged its tail, and looked at him with its clever eyes.

"Where there are dogs, there ought to be human beings too," thought the youth. He followed the dog which was now running ahead of him.

"And the people must be kind too," he thought further, "for the dog is very friendly and not at all wild."

But first let me tell you, my children, how the dog came to be there. It is really a very strange story!

On this Island, which is our dear Lanka, as you already know, there lived at this time two strange kinds of beings called Yakkhas and Nagas. These beings were said to have had the power of making themselves invisible, and they could show themselves in any shape or form they wished.

Kuveni, a Yakkha Queen, was always on the look out for shipwrecked people to devour them when they landed. She had heard from her spies, whom she always sent out, that a great many young men had been shipwrecked and had swum to the shore. She was delighted, and had sent one of her servants to the shore, in the shape of a dog, to entice the young men to a tank. That he succeeded in bringing the first young warrior with him we know already, and we must see now what happened later.

So we will now return to our young man! He followed the dog to the tank, where they stopped. The tank looked very inviting to the youth, and he put down his weapons and took off his clothes hoping the dog would take care of them, and jumped in, in order to take a refreshing bath, after the long and dangerous voyage. He also ate some of the Lotus roots from the tank and drank from the cooling water.

When he had refreshed himself, he looked for his weapons, the dog and his clothes; but to his astonishment both the weapons and the dog had disappeared. Throwing his clothes
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“And he put down his weapons and took off his clothes! hoping the dog would take care of them” (p. 65.)

over him, he was searching for his weapons, when Kuveni, who had changed herself into a dreadful monster, jumped at him and wanted to devour him. As he had no weapons, the poor youth would have been in a dreadful plight, had not the charm, which the messenger of the Lord Buddha had tied on his arm, saved him. He raised his left arm up against her and she recoiled. The charm was stronger than her power. He was saved !

However, she had him thrown into a dark prison, and she sent out the dog again to entice another young man to the Lotus tank, hoping that she would have better luck with him. The dog succeeded in leading to the tank, in the same manner all the followers of Vijaya who had gone, as agreed before, one by one, into the forest. But Kuveni could not harm any one of them on account of the charm. All of them were thrown into the same dark cave, and their only consolation and hope were that their brave Prince Vijaya would surely relieve them soon from their misery.

In the meanwhile Vijaya, himself, was still sitting under the same palm-tree, under which the Devotee had given them the charm, and waiting for his companions to come back.

Just before sunset, when none had returned, he grew anxious. He took up his five weapons of war, put his arrows into his gilded belt, and rushed into the jungle, where he found the same brown dog which guided him to the same tank in which his followers had

bathed. He himself, however, did not jump into the water, although it seemed very inviting, for he noticed that the traces of many feet were leading *into* the tank, but none *away* from it. He was looking around keenly, when he saw sitting under a tamarind tree a nun, who was spinning a thread very diligently, modestly looking down upon her work.

This was Kuveni again, who thought she must use different schemes to capture the Prince. However, Vijaya was not beguiled by her, but he jumped at her furiously and shouted.

“It is thou, wretch, who hast carried away my friends. Die !”

Half frightened to death, Kuveni begged for her life, and pleaded.

“Lord and master, I swear by my Yakkha oath that I will serve you for ever, if you will spare my life. I will give you back all your companions and make you King of this beautiful Island. I will be your slave, only spare me.”

At last Vijaya became somewhat pacified and let her go. Kuveni freed all the captured men from the dark cave in which they had been confined ; and she herself served Vijaya with cooked rice and other eatables which she had secured from wrecked ships. Her servants had to wait upon Vijaya's friends, and so they spent the first night in Lanka festively, being very grateful that the Gods had allowed them to land on such a nice country after their dangerous voyage.



“Vijaya, who was just waking from his slumbers, at first believed her to be a Devi” (ii. 71.)

Towards morning they rested round fires made of dried coconut leaves, for they would not go into the Yakkha huts which were offered to them, for fear of treachery.

CHAPTER III.

KUVENI.

In the meantime Kuveni, who had found out Vijaya's power, thought that it would be wise to be submissive. She calculated that if she were to make herself look beautiful, then he might marry her and make her his Queen. She could then give him her kingdom quite willingly, being a Queen. She knew very well that if she did not do that, he would take her kingdom by force and then she would lose everything. So, when morning came, she stood before him with her attendants as a lovely young maiden, adorned with all her jewels, and dressed in a beautiful red *sariya*, which was gracefully draped round her slender figure.

Vijaya, who was just waking from his slumbers at first believed her to be a Devi, so beautiful she looked, when she was standing before him, pleading her case. He liked the appearance of the Yakkha Queen very much, and so he willingly accepted her as his Queen, and her kingdom as a gift.

Vijaya and his companions now set to work to make themselves at home. They cut down trees and partly cleared the forest; built houses, planted paddy, made new tanks for

irrigation ; and lived quite contented with their work in their new home.

One night Vijaya heard music in the distance. He enquired from Kuveni about the cause of it and she replied.

“ In the neighbouring country a Yakkha Princess is just being given in marriage to a Yakkha Prince. There will be a seven days’ festival. If you wish it, I will give that part of the country also into your hands. Even if you do not see the Yakkhas, I will go amongst them during their wedding festival, and I will give you a sign by a Yakkha-call. Then you and your companions can kill them with your swords very easily.”

Vijaya was delighted with this proposal, as he was anxious to take possession of the whole Island, and the following night he did what Kuveni advised. He killed most of the Yakkhas and the others fled. Thus he became ruler over the whole of Lanka.

Vijaya might have been quite happy with his Yakkha Queen, if he had not sometimes thought with regret, that she was really not a human being, and only kept herself young and beautiful by her magic arts. She had borne him two children, a boy and a girl, but these children did not look much like other children, with their rough hair and their dark skin. They were so very, very ugly !

His subjects urged him continually to be crowned King of this land. He really deserved to be King, for he had already done so very much

for the Island, and large tracts of land were now under paddy cultivation. He had also a palace built for him, and decorated it inside with beautiful mats, curtains and various kinds of cloths. But every time his subjects pressed him to be crowned, he answered that it was not possible, because he had not a Queen-Consort of equal rank with himself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CORONATION OF VIJAYA.

The ministers of Vijaya, who always received the answer that he could not consent to be crowned King, sent a deputation secretly to the King of Madura, in South India, a relative of Vijaya, asking him to send his daughter to be Queen of Lanka. King Pandava of Madura, after consulting his ministers, resolved to send his daughter Vijayi to be the bride of Vijaya. Seven hundred noblemen were also willing to send their daughters with the Princess, to become the wives of Vijaya's followers, and a beautiful ship was fitted out for them. With their servants, and numerous and precious presents, they sailed for Lanka and arrived there safely.

When Vijaya was informed of the landing of this Princess from Madura, he had the hard task before him to get rid of the Yakkha-Queen Kuveni. He explained to her that she could not reign together with a *real* Queen. He offered to provide for her in any part of

his country and to retain the two children. Kuveni, however, breaking out into loud lamentations at losing him, for whom she had betrayed the Yakkhas, took her two children and wandered into the forest. She came to the gates of a Yakkha town, called Lankapura, and asked for admission ; but she was recognised, and fearing that she would betray the Yakkhas again as she had done before, she was seized and one of the Yakkhas killed her.

The two children escaped into the jungle, and they were never seen again. But it is said that the Vedddhas, of whom there are now only a few existing in Lanka, are their descendants.

The Princess Vijayi and her seven hundred virgin followers were received with great joy in Lanka. A grand wedding was celebrated, at which not only did Vijaya marry Vijayi, but also the seven hundred followers of Vijaya married the seven hundred maidens sent from Madura with the Princess.

The coronation festival of Vijaya and Vijayi was celebrated with great pomp, and for thirty-eight years Vijaya reigned over Lanka. He had given up all his bad ways. His subjects loved and honoured him, and his country was in a flourishing condition when he passed away.

This is the story of the first King of Lanka, who landed near Puttalam and took possession of the Island. He called his capital Tamana-Nuwara, which was situated a few miles from Puttalam,

["I like this story very much" said Susina very thoughtfully, "but I feel a little sorry for Kuveni, for after all, she had been very faithful to Vijaya."

"But you see, she was only a Yakkha-Queen and not a real one" answered Yasodhara, and she could not expect to live together with Queen Vijayi."

"Kuveni's children must have been very ugly if they were the ancestors of the Veddhas, because the Veddhas *are* fearfully ugly : I saw some not long ago, when I went to Badulla on a visit," remarked Nalini, looking very wise.

"To-morrow, my children," said the mother, "I will tell you the story of a beautiful Princess, named Baddha-Kacchayana, who became the second Queen of Lanka."]

STORY IV.

**BADDHA-KACCHAYANA, THE
BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS.**

CHAPTER I.

THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS.

In India there once lived a King of the name of Pandu. He was a son of the Sakya Prince Amitodana, the *paternal* uncle of the Buddha. Pandu had left his own land because enemies had broken in and he had not the power to drive them away. So he wandered away to the valley of the holy river Ganga with a good many of his subjects, who loved him too much to let him go away alone. He founded a new kingdom there, and soon it grew and flourished under his wise and just government.

He had a very virtuous wife of the name of Susima, and they had seven sons and one daughter. The daughter, whose name was Baddha-Kacchayana, was the youngest of all. She grew up to be a very lovely girl. Her skin was like the colour of gold, and her black hair was so long that it almost reached the ground. Her eyes shone like black diamonds, and she was as slender and graceful as a palm-tree. Those who saw her could not help loving her. When she grew up into maidenhood her beauty was so great that it could hardly be described. In the whole of India her loveliness was praised, and singers used to wander from court to

court describing the beauty of this Princess. But not only was she fair to look upon, she was also so kind and sweet in disposition that her serving-women would have given their lives for their sweet Princess.

Seven young Princes were aspiring to her hand in marriage, and they sent her beautiful presents of jewellery, etc., and all declared that they could not live without her. But with all this, they had only seen her at a distance, for in India it is not allowable to look at girls and admire them. So Baddha-Kacchayana remained quite indifferent to all this admiration which was paid her from a respectful distance. It is true, she was glad to have all these presents, and she liked to be adorned with them, for she was like other girls. When she was brought to her parents thus attired in her beautifully embroidered *sariya*, covered with jewellery, her dear little feet peeping like lotus buds out of her golden sandals, then, even the old King could well understand why it was that all the young Princes should fall in love with her.

King Pandu, however, grew more and more uneasy on account of her beauty, for you know he could only give his daughter to one of the seven Princes, and he feared that the other six would unite in war against him. Thus he would again lose his kingdom, which he had brought to such a flourishing state, and which he loved very dearly.

He thought it best to ask some of the wise Brahmanas for advice what he should do, and they really gave him a very strange

answer to his request. It was that "he should put his beautiful daughter on a ship on the river Ganga." They assured him that the ship would arrive in a beautiful Island; and that she would become the happy Queen of that Island. At first King Pandu did not like to hear of such a thing, and when he told his wife of this advice, she was so sad that he almost gave up the plan altogether. But the seven Princes pressed him more and more to give his decision, and at last he had to make up his mind what to do.

I suppose you will want to know why King Pandu and Queen Susima did not ask their daughter whom of these Princes she wished to marry. Perhaps that would have been the easiest in this peculiar case, but you see one cannot do such a thing in India. There, the parents and the elders of the family decide the marriage of their children. The girl is not asked whom she would like to marry. The horoscope is consulted, and then the parents decide. And believe me, the girls are quite contented with the choice of the parents, and they are quite happy with the husbands so chosen. And the husband is always very kind to his young wife, gives her all the beautiful things she likes and loves and honours her. She is happy in her household, and does not care even to see any other man but her husband. So it was two thousand years ago in India, and so it is yet. You see now that this difficult question of the marriage could not be decided so easily.

Of course they might have made an exception in her case, because she was a Princess, as sometimes Princesses were allowed to have their own choice of a husband. But then the other six Princes would have become angry, and the King would not risk it. And so, under these circumstances, it seemed best to King Pandu to follow the advice of the Brahmanas.

He sent for the seven Princes and told them to come after seven days to the river Ganga, where they would find the Princess. He told them also that, *that* Prince who could *capture* her should have her as his bride. The seven Princes were satisfied with this decision, and went home to their kingdoms ready to return within seven days, each one resolved that he *surely* would get the beautiful Princess.

CHAPTER II.

THE DECORATED SHIP.

Meanwhile King Pandu made his preparations. He had his best ship decorated beautifully, and explained to Baddha-Kacchayana the necessity of trusting herself to the ship in order to save her father's kingdom from ruin. He told her that the Gods would protect her, and direct her ship to a beautiful Island, of which she would become the happy Queen. At first the Princess was very unhappy, for she was afraid of being left alone on the ship and

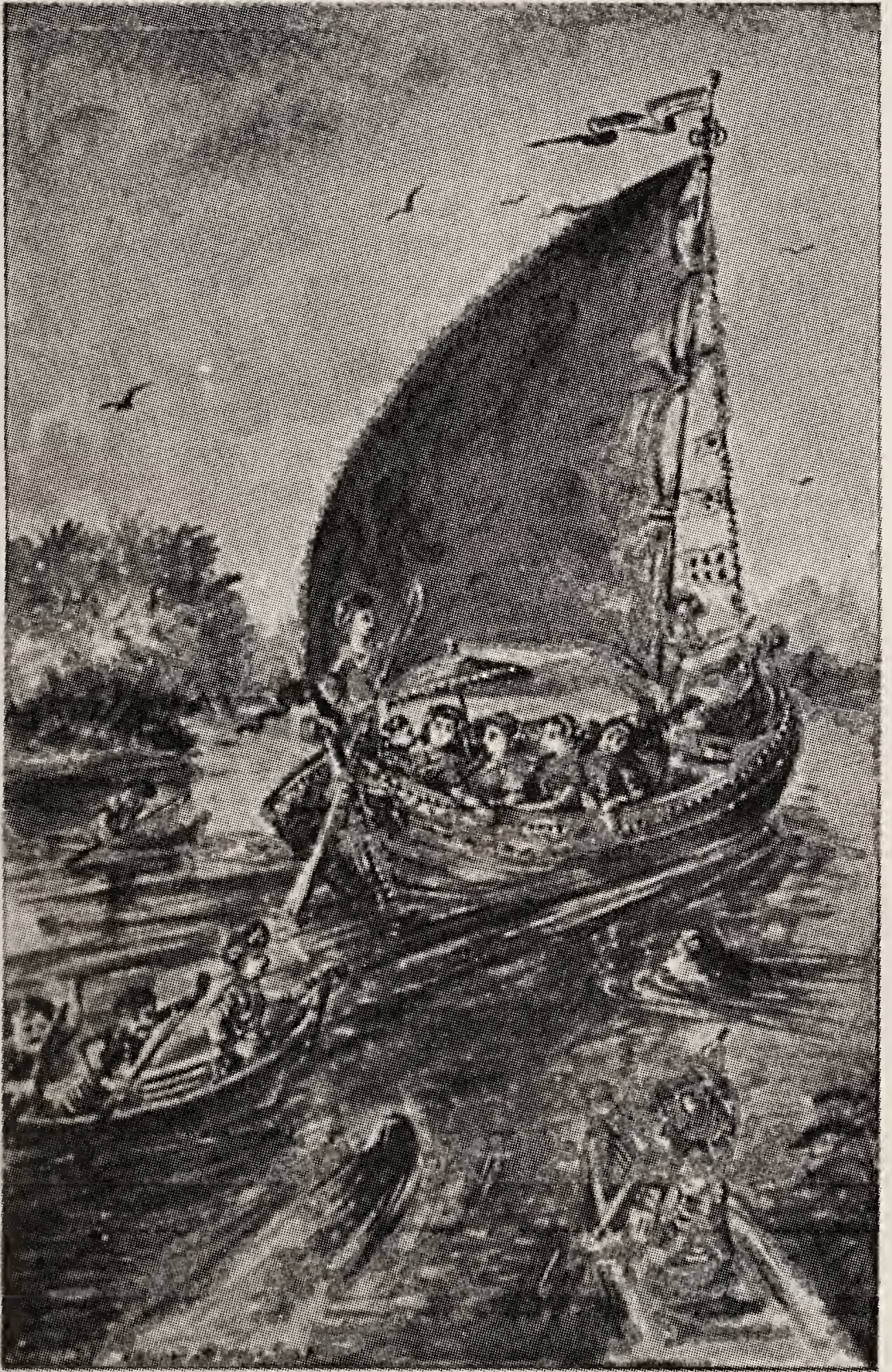
sorry to leave her parents. But when her father looked so very sad, and when her mother, although bathed in tears and choking with sobs, implored her to submit to her fate, she, as a true daughter of India, was obedient to her parents.

She had herself adorned as a bride, and, with thirty-two faithful companions, went on board the ship that was waiting for her on the holy Ganga. There she remained until the seven Princes arrived in all the splendour of their youth, beauty, and valour, just in time to see the beautiful Princess once more, as the ship moved slowly off down the holy River.

King Pandu then called to the seven Princes, "Look! There is your Princess! Who of you can overtake her may have her."

The seven Princes were so astonished that they could not understand at first what the old King meant. But after a moment's thought they realised his meaning. Some jumped into boats, and had their servants row them quickly after the ship, others ran along the bank and then plunged into the river to try to reach the ship by swimming! But all was in vain! The ship with the Princess was rapidly sailing down Ganga, and she was soon out of sight.

So the seven Princes had to return home sadly without their bride. And because *none* of them had got the beautiful Princess they made friends and consoled one another. They also forgave the old King Pandu, and allowed him to continue his reign in peace.



“The Ship with the Princess was rapidly sailing down Ganga” (p. 80.)

The ship, however, with Baddha-Kacchayana and her thirty-two faithful companions sailed on for twelve days. They left Ganga and entered the Indian Ocean. The Gods protected the innocent maidens, and the Ocean smoothed and quieted his waves. The sun smiled on the decorated ship, with rays made gentle by his love for them. During the night the moon winked at them good-naturedly with her one eye, and made a bright silvery pathway in which the ship sailed along quite smoothly.

[“It must have been very funny to see all the seven Princes trying to catch the ship, in which the Princess sailed away,” said Mangala, laughing heartily. “How foolish they must have looked when all of them came back without her.”]

“I am only glad they did not get very angry with King Pandu. What would he have done, if they had taken his newly-founded kingdom away from him?”

“I would have liked to see that beautifully decorated ship, and how sweet Baddha-Kacchayana must have looked when she was dressed as a bride,” whispered dear little Leelavattie. “I am going to call my doll Baddha-Kacchayana, and I am going to ask my big brother to make me a ship. Then I will dress her up as a bride and play going to Lanka.”

“But, my little girl, how do you know that she was going to land in Lanka?” asked the mother.

“ Oh, I know, she is, because you are telling us stories from the History of Lanka, so she *must* be landing in Lanka,” answered Leela, and looked very wise, “ and besides you are telling us the story of the second Queen of Lanka.”

“ Well done, my little one,” said the mother smilingly. “ I see that you understand what I am telling you.”]

CHAPTER III.

THE SECOND QUEEN OF LANKA.

Our ship with the Princess and her companions sailed on quite safely. After twelve days and nights they reached the shores of Tambapanni (Lanka), where, strange to say, they were already expected.

It came about in this way. An old Sage, of the name of Kalavela, had prophesied to the people of Gomakamaka that on a certain day a beautiful ship with thirty-three holy nuns would land on their shore; and he had asked them, when this took place, to receive them very kindly and with great reverence. The people were very hospitable anyhow, and revered Kalavela very much. So, when the ship with the Princess and her maidens was sighted, they were not astonished at all, but jumped into their katamarans and rowed to the ship. They invited the maidens (who had taken the disguise of nuns' clothes to protect themselves) to come on shore with them, which they did. Here they were received

with honour and kindness, and taken in palanquins, as they desired, to the town of Vijita, where one of the ministers of King Panduvasudeva of Lanka received them very kindly.

In the meanwhile the King had been informed that a ship with thirty-three holy nuns had arrived, and, remembering a prophecy that a disguised nun would become his Queen, he sent his first minister to Vijita to inquire who these nuns were and where they came from. The most trusted friend of Baddha-Kacchayana told him the whole story, and the minister recognised at once the prophecy of Kalavela and joyfully reported everything to Panduvasudeva, who was a nephew of Vijaya and the second ruler of the Island. He was not yet crowned, because he had not found a suitable Princess to be his Queen-Consort.

The King himself invited Baddha-Kacchayana to his Capital, Upatissa, where she was received with great joy. She had thrown aside the disguise of a nun, and arrived in Panduvasudeva's capital clad in her royal garments and adorned with the jewels of her royal ancestors. So beautiful did she look that the King and his people were delighted, and she was hailed at once as Queen of Lanka.

A brilliant wedding was celebrated, at which the rejoicings were very great. It was indeed a grand affair, because at the same time as the Royal wedding, the thirty-two maids-of-honour of the Princess were married to thirty-two men of rank of the King's household. Baddha-Kacchayana, the beautiful daughter of King Pandu

of India, was now the happy wife of Panduvasudeva, the second King of Lanka, who had now no objection to be crowned as King, as he had found such a lovely Queen-Consort.

Very wisely he reigned for a long time over his kingdom with his beautiful Queen.

["Thank you, dear mother, for this lovely story," said some of the children.

"I am very glad Baddha-Kacchayana landed in Lanka and not in some other Island" cried out some others.

"Well, my children, did you really like this story?" asked the mother.

"Of course we did," shouted all the children in chorus.

"I think our stories are *better* than fairy stories," said the wise little Somavattie. "They teach us so much more than the fairy tales." And she got up from her mat, very proud, that she had made such a wise remark.

Everybody laughed.

To-morrow you will hear the story of Baddha-Kacchayana's lovely daughter Chitra, and I hope that you will like it just as much as you did the story of her mother.]

STORY V.
CHITRA, THE CHARMER.

CHAPTER I,
CHITRA'S IMPRISONMENT.

The beautiful and clever Queen Baddha-Kacchayana was very happy in her new home. Loved and honoured by her subjects and by her husband King Panduvasudeva, who consulted her in everything, even in matters of government, she lived and worked, blessed by everybody.

From her parents, King Pandu and Queen Susima, she had had good tidings, for Panduvasudeva had sent a messenger to them with the news of her safe arrival, and of her accession to the Throne of Lanka.

After a time her seven brothers were longing to see her, and six of them—the eldest had to stay with his aged parents—arrived in Lanka. Many tears of joy were shed at seeing their beautiful sister as a happy Queen. King Panduvasudeva was very much pleased with these young Princes, and asked them to remain in Lanka altogether, and govern his new settlements. This they did very willingly. These settlements prospered and flourished, and were named after the Princes who governed them. And soon content and prosperity spread over the whole land.

Baddha-Kacchayana presented the King with ten sons and one daughter, amongst whom Abhaya was the eldest son; and the only

daughter was Chitra, the youngest of all. Chitra was the Queen's favourite, a fact, at which we cannot wonder, as she was so much like her mother. She grew up even more beautiful, if that were possible, than the Queen herself. Indeed when she was only twelve years old, she was so beautiful that everybody was charmed with her, and therefore she got the name "Unmada" Chitra (Chitra, the Charmer).

King Panduvasudeva, thinking of his wife's troubles when she was young and lovely, grew alarmed that the extraordinary beauty of his daughter might bring her parents similar trouble. He therefore thought it best to consult the Sages about the future of his daughter Chitra. To his great horror he received a dreadful answer to his questions about her. The Sages said, "Chitra will become the mother of a son who will kill nine of his uncles and usurp the throne."

Dreadfully frightened by this prophecy he spoke to the Queen about it, and he called also his ten sons together, and asked them what he ought to do. Nine of the ten brothers advised their father to have Chitra killed, because they were afraid of their lives. Abhaya, however, the eldest son, who loved his sister very much, and did not believe this prophecy, would not hear of this wicked proposal. As he was the heir to the throne, they had to take his advice, and so Chitra was not killed.

But in order to prevent Chitra from being seen by anybody, they had a circular room

built round a single pillar, with no windows, but some air-holes in the top and only one door, which led into the bedroom of the King and Queen. An old slave woman was posted at this inside door of Chitra's prison, and outside a hundred warriors were on guard night and day, so it was found impossible to get as much as even a glimpse of Chitra.

There, poor "Unmada" Chitra had to live now, quite lonely, only her parents and her brother Abhaya came to see her. That was a sad fate for the poor girl, and sometimes she used to stand leaning against her door, looking longingly into her parent's room, for there was not even a small window in her own room, through which she might gaze into the beautiful Palm Garden surrounding the Palace.

Sometimes she heard the guard outside talking of her beauty, and how lucky that Prince would be who should some day have her for his wife. Of course these warriors did not know anything about the dreadful prophecy. They only thought that she was watched so carefully, that no *unworthy* Prince might see her. When she heard these remarks, she said to herself :

"Why is it, that I am so cruelly imprisoned ? What have I done to deserve this ? Like other young people, I long for the enjoyment of life." "Oh ! why am I here lonely and sad without companions ?"

Her parents consoled her and said it was better for her future that she should stay in

this room, and so she tried not to complain any more, but it was very, very hard for her.

CHAPTER II.

CHITRA'S MARRIAGE.

The talk of Chitra's loveliness had not ceased, although she had seemingly disappeared. On the contrary, it spread abroad, that only a specially favoured Prince would be allowed to marry her, because her beauty was said to be greater than that of the Goddess of Beauty herself.

This report reached the ears of Digha-Gamini, the son of Dighayu, who was brother of Queen Baddha-Kacchayana.

This young Prince made up his mind to find this charming Princess, who was his relative, and to see and win her for himself. So he came to Panduvasudeva and offered his services to him. The King was pleased with the young Prince, and as he had no suspicion of his real intentions, he accepted his services. He assigned to him, conjointly with the Sub-King Abhaya, the charge of the household. This was just what Digha-Gamini wished, as he would have access now to all parts of the castle.

One day when the King and Queen were absent from home, he entered their bedroom, as supervisor of the household. Just at this moment the beautiful Chitra was stand-



“ Just at this moment the beautiful Chitra was standing in the doorway of her Prison ” (pp. 88-89.)

ing in the doorway of her prison, looking longingly into her parents' room. According to the Indian custom, she at once dropped the curtain which divided her room from that of her parents. But the one look which they exchanged had sufficed to make the two young people fall in love with each other.

After the Prince had gone, Chitra spoke to her faithful slave. "Tell me, tell me quickly, who is that beautiful youth, and what is he doing in the Palace of my father?"

When she heard that he was a nephew of her mother Queen Baddha-Kacchayana, and in charge of the household, she wished very much that he might be her future husband; for she knew neither of the dreadful prophecy, nor that her parents did not want her to be married at all. Next day and the following days she received flowers from the young Prince, which he gave to her slave woman to be handed to her. Now, her longing to be released from her prison, and to meet the one who loved her so ardently, became greater and greater.

She became sadder and sadder, and her lovely body became more delicate every day. She looked indeed like a faded lotus flower. Queen Baddha-Kacchayana was very anxious about her daughter, and questioned her about her sadness. She feared her daughter's death, because she would neither eat nor drink, but would spend her days and nights weeping and crying. But Chitra, who knew that death was to be the doom of the man who should dare

to look at her, feared this penalty for her lover, and kept her secret. At last her mother promised that she would pardon her for any wrong she might have done if she would only reveal the cause of her grief, and Chitra confessed that Digha-Gamini had seen her, and that they loved each other.

Frightened almost to death, the Queen told her daughter the prophecy about her. She explained that the King had thus severely treated her in order to prevent her marriage. Full of grief, her mother went to the King and told him the whole story. But to her delight, the good King looked upon the matter in a milder way than she expected. He liked Digha-Gamini and loved his daughter Chitra very much, and he did not wish their death. He called Digha-Gamini, explained the whole prophecy about Chitra to him, and promised the Prince that he would allow him to marry her on one condition. This was that he should agree, that, if Chitra gave birth to a son, he would have him put to death, in order to prevent the great misfortune of such a son growing up to kill his uncles.

Thinking only of the joy of receiving such a prize as this beautiful Princess, the young Prince promised everything that was asked from him.

Chitra was released from her prison. A very quiet marriage was solemnised, and the happy couple lived contentedly in the palace of her parents.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXCHANGE OF THE CHILDREN.

When the time came for Chitra to be a mother, she secretly sent out her faithful slave woman, the trustworthy companion of her prison, to bring a woman who was also to become a mother, and hide her in the palace. On the same day, the Princess, and the woman who was thus selected, each gave birth to a child ; that of Chitra being a boy, while the other was a girl. Immediately Chitra had the children exchanged, and sent word to her father King Panduvasudeva, and to her husband Prince Digha-Gamini, that she had become the mother of a daughter. But Queen Baddha-Kacchayana knew of this exchange of children, and she approved of it, for how could she allow her little grandson to be killed !

Chitra gave the woman, whose daughter was now adopted as Princess, a hundred pieces of gold. Then she told her to take the little Prince (who had been called by his grandmother, Pandu-Abhaya, after her father Pandu, and Chitra's eldest brother, Abhaya), put him into a little basket-cradle, and carry him to a faithful herdsman in the village of Dvaramandalaka. The good woman did what she was told very willingly.

On her way to the village, however, she met Chitra's nine brothers, who were out hunting. The suspicious Princes asked the woman " what

have you in your basket?" "Rice cakes," she answered, "for my daughter."

The Princes wanted to convince themselves of the truth of this. They wished to examine the contents of the basket for themselves and made her put it on the ground. Surely the poor little Prince, who was fast asleep, would now have been discovered if two Yakkhas, having come along invisibly for the protection of the child, had not quickly changed themselves into two wild boars. The nine Princes, astonished and delighted at seeing such good game, forgot all about the basket-cradle and chased them, and so the little Prince was saved from death.

Quickly the faithful woman took up the basket and went off as fast as she could, in the opposite direction. She delivered the young Prince safely to the herdsman, whose wife had just had a little son. For the protection of the little Prince, the herdsman announced to his neighbours now, that his wife had presented him with twins, two sons. So the young Prince was adopted by the herdsman, and brought up by him together with his own little son.

The faithful woman, enriched by the gifts of the Queen, and the presents of Princess Chitra, returned to her native village, and kept the secret about Prince Pandukabhaya, so that no one ever heard of it from her.

[“How clever that was of Princess Chitra to exchange the two children. I hope the nine



“They wished to examine the contents of the basket, etc.” (p. 92.)

Princes will not find out the secret," said Chandravattie !"

"Well ! my dear, you will hear in the next story what became of the little Prince, you must have a little patience," answered the mother.

"It must have been very hard for Princess Chitra to send her little boy away to the herdsman. But certainly it was better than to have him killed. I think I would have done just the same," said the wise little Somavattie.

This time the little girl did not wait for the other girls to laugh at her remarks, but she gave a commanding look around, put up her head and marched off like a little Princess herself, looking as sweet as a picture.]

STORY VI.
PANDUKABHAYA.

CHAPTER I.
THE LITTLE PRINCE PANDUK-
ABHAYA.

In the same year, in which Prince Pandukabhaya, the son of the beautiful Princess "Unmada" Chitra was born, King Panduvasudeva, who had reigned for thirty years over his country, passed away. His eldest son, Abhaya, the protector of Chitra, now became King of Lanka.

Abhaya was not as wise as his father had been, and it was said that he had a weak will, but he was very kind to his people, and his *poor* subjects specially loved him. To his sister, the Princess Chitra, he was very good, and he always took her part, when his brothers treated her unkindly. These nine brothers watched Chitra very closely, for they did not quite believe that her so-called daughter was really the daughter of the Princess, for she was not at all like their sister. It is true that she looked quite pretty when she was dressed in her beautiful *sariya*, but she did not look like a Princess, and her skin had a peculiar tint which is not generally found among high-born girls. And then these nine Princes found out that their sister Chitra used to look with sad eyes at the little girl, and, when she saw a little boy of the same age, they noticed that she looked longingly

at him. So it came about that they sent out spies into every neighbouring village to find out a boy who bore signs of Princely birth and who might be their sister's child.

When these spies came to the village of Dvaramandalaka they heard that there was a herdsman's little son, just seven years old, who looked and behaved very differently from his companions. When the boys were at play he always made himself King, and understood quite well how to lead and govern his little subjects. Even the people thought that he could hardly be the son of a humble herdsman.

The spies brought this news to the nine Princes, and then they became very suspicious, for it was just seven years ago that the so-called little Princess was born. So they made up their minds to have this high-minded little herdsman's son killed. As they could not do this openly they sent out secretly some ruffians to kill all the herdsmen's sons of that age in Dvaramandalaka.

The plan was as follows. They were to kill the boys while they were bathing in a certain pond in the woods near the village, where they used to go very frequently.

One day, when all the little boys, including Pandukabhaya, went to this pond to bathe, the ruffians surrounded it, counted the number of suits of clothes which were lying on the bank, and killed the same number of boys. They reported this dreadful deed to the nine Princes,

who now felt satisfied and hoped that if a Prince had really been living, he was now dead.

[“So poor Pandukabhaya was killed?”
“What a pity!” cried the children.

“Well, my dear children, I will tell you how it came about that he was *not* killed, although he was among the boys who went to the pond.”]

On one side of the pond there was a large hollow tree. But the hollow could not be seen, as its opening was just under the water. Pandukabhaya had found this out, and he used to tease his play-fellows by disappearing suddenly under the water. Creeping into the hollow tree, he used to remain there, laughing at the boys, when he heard them inquiring and wondering what had become of him.

On this fatal day, Pandukabhaya had quickly taken his clothes, dived under the water, and was sitting in the hollow of the tree when the murderers came to the tank.

How dreadful it must have been for him to hear the screams of his companions when they were being murdered, you may imagine. But as he was too young to help them, he remained in the hiding place of the tree until all was over. Then he slipped out of it, and fled to his foster-father, the faithful herdsman, and told him the dreadful story of the murder. The herdsman was naturally very sad, for he had lost his own son too. But as he suspected the real meaning of this murder, and as he loved the little Prince very dearly, he hid him in



“Pandukabhaya.....dived under the water and was sitting in the hollow of the tree when the Murderers came to the Tank” (p. 96.)

his house for some time, for fear that he might yet be murdered, until it seemed to him safe that he should go about again.

CHAPTER II.

FURTHER ATTEMPTS ON PANDUK-ABHAYA'S LIFE.

Until his twelfth year of age Prince Pandukabhaya lived on with the faithful herdsman, undiscovered. Then the rumour came again to the nine Princes about a beautiful little boy, the son of a herdsman, who was the only one of his age in Dvaramandalaka, and who certainly had neither the looks nor the manners of a boy of such a humble class. They again began to be alarmed at the prospect of losing their lives, thinking of the prophecy that the son of Princess Chitra would kill them all and take possession of the throne. So they planned this time that they would have all the herdsmen killed, and this one boy of twelve years of age also.

They found a good opportunity to carry out their plan on a day when the herdsmen had succeeded in killing a wild beast, which they were to roast and feast upon in the field. They asked the Prince Pandukabhaya to bring them a firebrand from his father's hut, to start the fire for the roasting of the animal. But the Prince pretended to be very tired and he asked his elder foster-brother to take the firebrand instead. He really wanted to stay behind with his foster-father, who was ill and could not partake of this feast.

This was the salvation of the young Prince, for the hired ruffians, believing that the youth who brought the firebrand was the Prince, killed him and all the herdsmen, just when they were feasting on the roasted animal.

When this was reported to the nine Princes, they thought that they had now nothing to fear, as surely the prophecy could not be fulfilled.

The old herdsman, however, ill as he was, took the little Prince with him and wandered away, secretly, into another village, in order to save his life. There he had a hard time to get his living, as he was old and feeble. The little Prince helped him faithfully in his work, and nursed him when he was ill.

So they lived together until Pandukabhaya was sixteen years old, when again his uncles got news of his being alive. This time Princess Chitra became very much alarmed, when she heard that the life of her beloved son was threatened.

She sent a faithful servant with a letter and with a thousand gold pieces to the herdsman and asked him to send the young Prince, her son, at once to a rich Brahman named Pandula, who lived in the village of Pandula, in the south of Lanka.

The old herdsman now explained to the Prince his parentage, showed him the letter of the Princess Chitra, his mother, and told him to obey her command at once as his life was in danger.

Sadly the youth bade farewell to the faithful man, who had so kindly protected him for sixteen years, and after a long and difficult search he found Pandula, the Brahman.

Pandula was a very learned Brahman, who was well versed in the Vedas, and when Pandukabhaya had told him his story, he greeted him thus :—

“ I know you, Pandukabhaya, stay with me, and be my son. I make this prophecy about you. You will be King some time ; you will reign for seventy years, and you will make your subjects very happy. But now you must learn everything that I know, so that you may be able to become a wise King.”

Pandula educated Pandukabhaya along with his own son Canda, and the Prince was a credit to his *guru*. He did not become merely a handsome and brave man, but also grew up to be a good and wise one. Where he lived was not discovered until he was able to gain his own rights as Prince of the Royal house.

[“ I am ever so happy that little Pandukabhaya escaped so many times. I wonder whether the prophecy will become true yet !” inquired Yasodhara.

“ Patience ! my children, you will hear all about it,” said the mother.]

CHAPTER III.

PANDUKABHAYA'S MEETING
WITH PALI.

When Prince Pandukabhaya was strong enough to win back his own Princely rights, and wise enough to be able safely to undertake the office of Sovereign, Pandula gave him sixteen-thousand gold pieces. Pandukabhaya then raised an army of five hundred soldiers, whom he treated very kindly and generously; he really cared for them like a father, although he was very young yet, which earned him the love of all these men. Accompanied by his faithful foster-brother, Canda, he started on his mission, to find the throne which had been promised him in the prophecy. Pandula dismissed Pandukabhaya with his blessings, and the only reward he asked for what he had done was the promise, that when the Prince had become King, he would make Pandula's son Canda his first minister. He gave him also much good advice, and told him that he should marry that Princess in whose hands leaves would turn into gold.

Pandukabhaya now proclaimed his name, and his intention to ascend the throne which even before his birth, had been prophesied, as destined for him.

On his way to the Kira Mountain, seven hundred soldiers joined his army, so that by this time he could count twelve hundred brave warriors on his side. He marched to the mountain of Girikanda in the province of the

same name, which was governed at that time by one of his uncles Girikandasiva.

This uncle was busy in the field, supervising the paddy-harvest, when Pandukabhaya marched through his province. Here Pandukabhaya met a procession of women, and in the midst of it he saw a royal palanquin carried by eight richly dressed bearers. He was curious to know whether the occupant of the palanquin was beautiful, so he had his own palanquin brought near, and he ordered that the palanquin of the strange lady should be separated from those of her suite. The occupant was Pali, the daughter of Prince Girikandasiva, a peerless beauty. She was on her way to take her father his evening meal to the field.

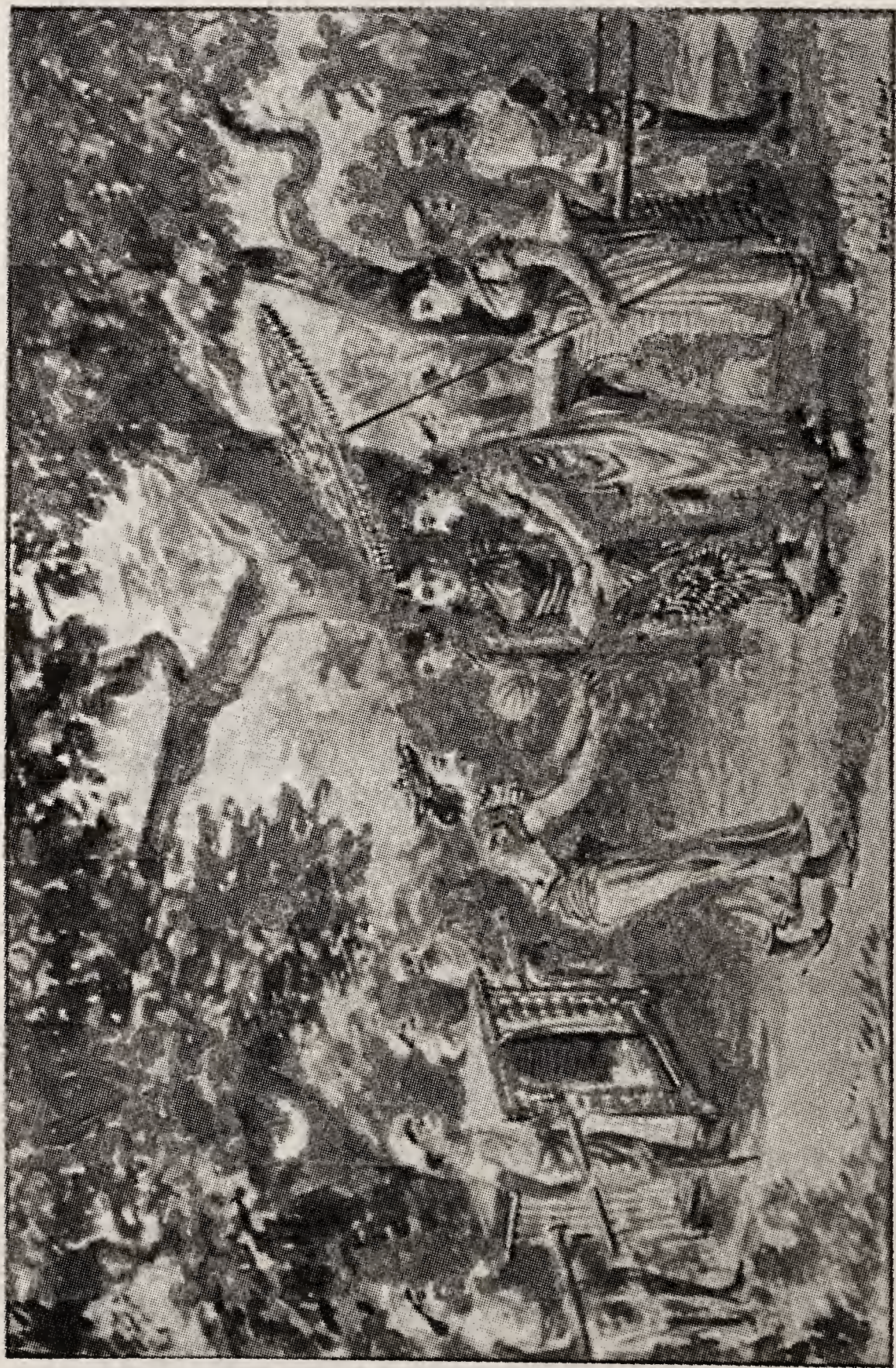
“From this we can see that Pali was not only beautiful, but she was also a good, dutiful daughter, looking *herself* after the comforts of her father, who was working for the welfare of his people in personally supervising the paddy-harvest.”

“Have you ever seen how paddy is harvested in India or Ceylon, my children? It is really a very pretty sight! All the men and women stand in a row in the paddy field and cut off the paddy plants, not singly, but in small sheaves. Bending to the right and to the left regularly, they cut off the plants, while chanting a sweet, low, monotonous melody, which sounds like a *mantram*, praying to the Devas to bless the harvest. Then they lay the plants down gently, in little heaps, to be dried in the hot sun. All this goes on regularly

and rhythmically. Afterwards, a nice square spot; near the paddy-field, is cleaned from all grass and weeds. It is then covered with white sand, and the half-dried paddy is brought there and put up in high heaps, where it stays till thrashed out of the straw by buffaloes. The owners of the paddy, only the men, come together there and divide the paddy, one part is for the Devas, one for the Priests, seven parts for the family, and one for the next year's sowing. The family does not take their portion of the paddy till the Devas and the Priests have had their share. Such was the beautiful custom!"

At a similar paddy-harvesting-festival Girikandasiva was present. But it was a very grand affair, as it was the harvesting for the King, and naturally a great number of rice-fields were owned by him. Prince Girikandasiva had come himself to supervise it, not only for the sake of supervising, but also because this was *Rajah-kariya*, or work done without pay for the King. The Prince walked about and spoke here and there some kind words to the workers, encouraging them at their work and telling them that as they were doing this work willingly and without pay for the King, they had as a reward their *own* paddy-fields given them as free grants and they could live without anxiety for their own food. As there were many workers busy, so also there were many high-born people present, who watched the work, and everybody looked happy and contented.

Now to this scene of harvesting the beautiful



“Princess Palf.....handed the Prince some cooked rice and curry in a golden dish” (p 103.)

Pali was going with her faithful attendants, carrying food for Prince Girikandasiva and for a great many of the workers, who had come from a distance and could not have their food sent.

Pandukabhaya was delighted when he saw the beautiful Pali, and he asked her very politely whether she would be good enough to give him and his followers some of the food she carried with her. Pali being as kind-hearted as she was beautiful, had her palanquin stopped under a Nigrodha-tree and alighting, handed the Prince some cooked rice and curry in a golden dish. She gave his followers also some food on some Nigrodha-leaves, and lo! the leaves turned into gold in her hands. She distributed some food to everybody, and still the cooked food was not less than if only *one* person had partaken of it.

On account of the wonderful change of the Nigrodha-leaves into gold in her hands she was called from this time *Suvanna-Pali* (golden Pali).

Prince Pandukabhaya found this Princess Pali so very beautiful, and he had taken such a fancy to her—also remembering Pandula's advice to marry that Princess in whose hands leaves turned into gold—that he persuaded her to come with him, promising her that she would become his Queen as soon as he had gained his kingdom.

So Pandukabhaya took Princess Pali with him. (I suppose she did not resent it at all,

because she thought him very handsome and very brave.)

But Pali's father naturally was very angry about it, and he sent his five sons with an army after them. A battle was fought, in which Canda (Pandula's son) and his warriors destroyed the whole army of Girikandasiva's sons, and at which Canda himself fought with and killed the five brothers of Pali in single fight one after the other.

Pandukabhaya and Pali were married, but only after seventeen years she became Queen of Lanka.

["Did Pandukabhaya take Princess Pali with him *before* she had brought the food to her father and the workers? asked thoughtful Mangala?"]

"Well, my dear," answered the mother smilingly, "I really do not know; but I hope that he had enough consideration to let her attend to her duty to her father first and then take her away with him. He had plenty of time to wait, as it took him seventeen years before he would really make her 'Queen' as he promised her."]

CHAPTER IV.

THE WONDERFUL BATTLE HORSE.

“I will not weary you, my dear children, with the recital of the wars of Prince Pandukabhaya, for I am sure you would get tired of hearing of seventeen years of war. I will only tell you about a wonderful battle-horse he captured for himself.

You see at that time where we are in our stories, more than two thousand three hundred years ago, every King had either a war-elephant or a splendid war-horse. Our Pandukabhaya had none, and he was wondering where he could get either one or the other to suit him.”

Then one of his soldiers told him that he had seen in the neighbourhood of the Dhuma-rakka Mountain, near a swamp, a magnificent horse with brown legs, and it was a large and well-built animal, and certainly it would make a magnificent war-horse for Pandukabhaya, if it could be caught. The Prince took it at once into his head that he must find and catch this horse, and he started immediately to the place described by the warrior with only a strong rope.

Sure enough, when he arrived there, he saw a splendid looking horse, grazing quite quietly near the swamp. He tried to throw the rope over its neck, but without success.

This was really no *ordinary* horse at all, but it was a Yakkhini with the name of Citiya,

who was accustomed to wander about in the shape of a horse.

When she saw Pandukabhaya coming, she was so surprised and awed by his imposing appearance, that she forgot to use her power to make herself invisible, and she ran seven times round the swamp without stopping. The Prince, who was a splendid runner and who was determined to catch this magnificent horse, pursued her. Again three times she ran round the swamp and then, getting tired, jumped into the water.

Pandukabhaya, who was also a good swimmer jumped after her. He seized the horse's tail with one hand, with the other a large palmyra-leaf, which came just then floating down the river, and which turned in his lucky hands into a big sword. Brandishing this big sword over the horse's head he cried: "I will kill thee, if thou dost not obey me at once." "Lord and Master," the Yakkhini cried, "grant my life and I will win the kingdom for you. I am strong and clever ; accept me as your war-horse and you will always be victorious !"

He caught her by the neck, pierced her nostrils with the sword, threw the rope over her, and she became manageable at once.

He led her into his encampment at the Dhumarakka Mountain, and as soon as he proclaimed her as his war-steed, he felt a great warlike strength come to him.

With the help of this wonderful horse. Pandukabhaya conquered the country. *Eight.*

of his uncles were killed in this war which lasted seventeen years. Only Abhaya, who had not fought against the Prince, and the father of Pali were left, and for these two uncles Pandukabhaya provided wisely and kindly in giving Abhaya the night sovereignty of Anuradhapura, the capital of Lanka, and in leaving Girikandasiva in his own province to govern it.

Pandukabhaya became a very good King. He reigned for seventy years as the wise Pandula had prophesied, and when he died, Lanka was in a very prosperous condition.

So let us take leave of Pandukabhaya, who had such a very sad youth, but who became afterwards such a very energetic and clever King, making his subjects very happy and governing Lanka very wisely.

[“That *was* a wonderful horse, which could talk,” said little Sumana. “I wish I could see such a horse.”]

“Well ! my little girl, I am very much afraid that your wish cannot be fulfilled, because you see that was really a Yakkhini. And you will remember that I told you that the Rakshasas and the Yakkhas were said to be able to change themselves into any shape they liked, and that they could make themselves invisible. Kuveni was a Yakkhini, and the brown dog she sent to catch the followers of Vijaya was another. And in the story about Prince Pandukabhaya the two invisible Yakkhas changed themselves into two wild boars to

turn the attention of the nine Princes away from the basket-cradle in which the little Prince was hidden. You must not forget that all this had happened long, long ago, and a great deal of it is fable.

So, I do not think you will ever see a Yakkha or Rakshasa at the present time.

We have now come to that time in Ceylon History, where a change in the Religious views of the people had come.

Up to this time the Sinhalese were 'Hindus' in their faith. That is quite natural, for Vijaya and his companions and the Princesses Vijayi and Baddha-Kacchayana and their followers were Hindus.

It was almost three hundred years after the passing away of the Lord Buddha, or three hundred and seven B. C., when Tissa, the King of Lanka, was converted to Buddhism.

This brings me to the next story, which is really not quite a story, and that is the Introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon."]

STORY VII.
**THE INTRODUCTION OF BUD-
DHISM INTO CEYLON.**

CHAPTER I.

KING ASOKA.

King Pandukabhaya, of whom I have told you so much, had an only son of the name of Mutasiva, who became his successor. But as he was not a very remarkable King, I will only tell you that he had ten sons and *two daughters*. The second of his sons became a very famous King, with the name of Tissa. He was so much beloved by the people, that he received the name Devanampiya-Tissa (Tissa the delight of the Devas), and it is said that when he became King very many wonders occurred. Among other things many treasures, such as pearls, gold and gems, which had been hidden in the earth for a long time, came to the surface and were brought to him, and all the people of Lanka expected something remarkable of him on account of all these so-called good and lucky signs.

I must tell you a great deal about this good King Tissa, as it was he who became the first Buddhist King of Lanka.

["But, may I ask who brought the Buddhist Religion to Lanka?" asked one of the girls.

"That was a very sensible question, my dear Susina," answered the mother, and I will leave King Tissa for a while and tell you first

the story of King Asoka of India, who brought Buddhism to Ceylon.”]

In India there lived at the same time as King Tissa in Lanka, a very famous King of the name of Asoka. Asoka was a great warrior. He had conquered a great part of India, and after the wars were ended and all was quiet once more, he became very sad that so much blood had been shed.

On glancing around, he saw distress and suffering everywhere. Here, a poor widow had lost her sons through the war, there a young mother mourned the death of her husband through the battle. Here were young children starving, as their mother could not support them, having lost their father in the war. And besides this, the paddy-fields were destroyed, and poverty and famine stared him in the face everywhere.

All this made him very sad indeed, for he was a good King at heart, and it had not occurred to him that his own fame would bring distress to his subjects. He had been carried away by his enthusiasm and the idea of his greatness, and he had forgotten the cost of them. Then he resolved, at once, that he must do everything to make his people happy, and to allay the distress in his country, as much as it was in his power.

He also became aware, that not only, had he to try to make his people happy, but also he had to make them forget, *how* he had gained the

kingdom. His conscience told him he never could make up for the wrong he had done to his elder brother Sumana, who ought to have been King.

Sumana had been absent from Pataliputra, the capital of Jambudvīpa, when the old King, his father, died. He was governing another Province at that time. But Asoka made war against him, and he was killed in battle. Thus Asoka secured for himself the throne which ought to have come to the elder brother.

It is very sad, but it is true, that the wife of Prince Sumana, who was just then to become the mother of a child, had to flee for her life. She came to a Chandala village, and these poor people had pity on her. They built her a hut under a Nigrodha (Banyan) tree and waited on her kindly. There she became the mother of a son, and because he was born under a Nigrodha tree, she named him Nigrodha.

We do not know what became of her later on, but we know that she consecrated the life of her son to the Buddhist Priesthood. He grew up as a very pious and good monk, and just at the time when King Asoka had conquered the greater part of India, he was a Samanera Priest.

But to return to King Asoka :—One day when King Asoka was standing on the flat roof of his palace, thinking deeply about the problem, how to make good the wrong he had done to his elder brother, and to make his subjects happy, he saw sitting under a banyan

tree, facing his palace, a young yellow-robed Monk. He liked the look of the young Monk and sent one of his attendants to him, asking him to come in and tell him something about the Order of Monks, to which he belonged. Samanera Nigrodha, for it was he who was sitting under the banyan-tree, came into the palace, as he was bidden, but King Asoka did not know him.

When King Asoka asked him to take the seat which was suited to his rank, Nigrodha, looking around, took his seat on King Asoka's throne, which stood in the great Audience Hall.

Naturally King Asoka was very much astonished at the audacity of the young Priest. Seeing the annoyance of the King, Nigrodha said:

"Do not be annoyed with me, and listen to the story of my life. I am sure that after you know who I am, you will do all you can for me, because you are good at heart, and just. And although you have made some very sad mistakes, you are grieving about them, and you are trying to make up for them."

Then Nigrodha related the sad story of his father and mother, and King Asoka saw that really this young monk ought to have been the King and that the throne he was sitting on now, temporarily, was his by right of birth.

King Asoka was very penitent about his former misdeeds. He asked Nigrodha to re-

main with him, and teach him, and he became a very eager disciple of the Samanera.

Very soon Asoka became convinced of the truth of the Samanera's teachings. He felt that the Buddhist Religion would help him and his people out of their distress. He became an ardent Buddhist, and he made Buddhism the State Religion of his empire.

Asoka then forbade the killing of animals for food, and the killing of animals for sacrifice. He distributed rice for food, and paddy for sowing. After a short time prosperity returned to his country, and contentment began to reign. King Asoka lived now only for the benefit of his people. He was wise, and just, and good, and all his people loved him; and they followed his example and became followers of the Lord Buddha.

Now King Asoka began to gather the Relics, collected on the ground where the body of the Lord Buddha had been cremated. Some of them had come to him by inheritance. He distributed them throughout his Empire and enshrined them in Thupas. He also erected many Viharas and pillars of stone with inscriptions on them from the Buddhist Dharma. And he caused to be held in veneration the Holy Bodhi or Aswatha-Tree, under which the Lord Buddha became enlightened.

[Now you know, my children, who King Asoka was, the great Buddhist King of India. It was this King, who was a friend and ally of

King Tissa of Lanka, through whom Buddhism was introduced to this Island.

I will tell you to-morrow how it all came about.]

CHAPTER II.

KING TISSA.

When all the treasures, of which I spoke to you yesterday, were brought to King Tissa, he thought that he was not worthy of them, and that most of them ought to be given to his great friend King Asoka. So he sent four of his ministers with a great many of these precious things to India to King Asoka as tokens of his friendship. King Asoka was very much pleased with them, and in answer, sent with some other gifts, a letter with the sincere advice, that King Tissa should follow his example and become a Buddhist, like himself.

King Tissa became very thoughtful, for he knew what this new Religion, Buddhism, had done for King Asoka, and he wished very much to know something about the Religion of his noble friend, so that he would be able to judge for himself whether he and his subjects ought to follow the advice to become Buddhists. This opportunity was to come soon to King Tissa, for King Asoka had decided to send his only son Mahinda, who had become a great teacher of Buddhism, to Lanka, to preach the Dharma to his friend.

And now I will tell you, my children, how King Tissa and the Thera Mahinda met first.

One day King Tissa was out hunting, as used to be his custom, for he was a keen sportsman. He came near the Mihintale Mountain, far ahead of his retinue, quite alone, when he saw at the foot of the mountain an elk grazing quietly. He was too just a man to shoot the deer without giving warning to the animal, and so he sounded his bow-string in order to make a noise. The elk at once started and fled up the mountain and King Tissa was soon after him.

This was really not an elk at all, but a Deva, who had taken the shape of an elk in order to make King Tissa come up to the top of the mountain, and to find there Mahinda and his companions, who had just come from India, as messengers from King Asoka.

Up the mountain the elk fled and King Tissa close after it. He had almost reached it, and was getting ready to shoot it when it suddenly disappeared near a yellow-robed Monk, who lifted up his hand and called out : "Tissa, come here!" King Tissa was very much astonished and perplexed, for he was sure that he had seen an elk just a moment ago, and he could not understand how this noble-looking yellow-robed Monk, quite differently clad from other Monks he had ever seen before, should have come here and even address him by his own name. Putting his bow and

arrow down he asked Mahinda "Who are you, and how did you come here?"

Mahinda answered: "I am the son of King Asoka. Out of compassion for you I have come to preach to you and your people the Dharma of the Lord Buddha. You ask how I came, great King? Neither by water nor by land is my answer" (indicating thus, that he came through the air). "Are more of these yellow-robed men in King Asoka's empire?" asked Tissa. "It glitters with yellow robes in Jambudvipa," answered Mahinda.

All this astonished King Tissa so much, that he put aside his bow and arrow and gave up his hunt altogether. A learned discussion began now between Tissa and Mahinda, through which Mahinda was convinced that King Tissa was ready for the new Faith which he was to bring to him, and King Tissa was convinced that Mahinda was a very able Preacher, of whose teachings he wanted to hear more.

When King Tissa's followers, who had been far behind him, came up the mountain, they were very much astonished to find their King Tissa, quite against his custom, sitting on the ground quietly, listening to the words of a strange yellow-robed man. All his hunting spirit seemed lost, for bow and arrows were lying on the ground unused. They had never seen their King thus, and they wondered what had come over him.

Now, King Tissa asked Mahinda to preach them a sermon, which he did. And this first



“A learned discussion began now between Tissa and Mahinda” (p. 116.)

sermon was so convincing, that not only the King, but also his followers, were eager to hear more, and Mahinda and his companions were invited to come to Anuradhapura, so that they might also teach the royal household and the people there.

[I must mention here, my little friends, that later on a Dagoba was built by King Tissa's younger brother, Uttiya, in memory of the first meeting of the two great men, Tissa and Mahinda and of the first Buddhist sermon preached in Lanka. After two thousand two hundred years, the place where Tissa saw Mahinda first and where the elk disappeared is shown to the visitor at the present time. The Dagoba, which is called Ambustale Dagoba, holds also Mahinda's ashes and stands in good preservation still. The columns around it are mostly fallen down, but they show the beauty of the artwork on them, done so many, many years ago. If you ever go to Anuradhapura, you must not fail to visit Mihintale and see this Dagoba, built at the "meeting place" of which I have told you.]

Mahinda preached first in King Tissa's palace grounds, so that the ladies of the royal household should have a chance of hearing him. Then the stables of the State-elephants were converted into Halls, but as they were also too small to hold the crowds of people who came to hear the great preacher, the royal Nandana pleasure garden was given up to Mahinda and his Theras.

In a very short time, King Tissa, his whole household and all his subjects became Buddhists.

Mahinda did not leave Lanka again during his life-time. He ordained very many young Sinhalese men as Priests, and there was an appeal from Princess Anula, the wife of King Tissa's younger brother, and her five hundred maid-servants and some other women to enter the order of Nuns.

As Mahinda had no permission to ordain Nuns he proposed to King Tissa, that King Asoka should be asked to send his daughter Sanghamitta, who had become a renowned Priestess, to Lanka.

King Tissa sent at once his nephew Arrittha to India with that request to King Asoka, and although this good King was very much distressed to lose his daughter as well as his son, he consented and sent her over to Lanka. Sanghamitta brought with her the right branch of the Bodhi-tree from the present Buddha-Gaya, under which the Buddha gained illumination, and it was planted in Anuradhapura in the Mahamegha Garden.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEDICATION OF LANKA TO BUDDHISM.

King Tissa had become such an ardent Buddhist that he presented his beautiful Mahamegha Garden to the Priests. Then he



“To the Isurumuniya Temple” (p. 119.)

arranged a great Festival to consecrate Lanka to Buddhism.

He had his two magnificent State-elephants harnessed to a golden plough, which he guided himself, and he ploughed a large circle round the city of Anuradhapura enclosing the Mahamegha Garden in this circle. This land was to be especially dedicated to the erection of sacred buildings. The Priests and thousands of people followed the King in procession, and the women strewed flowers in the furrows made by the plough.

When the two ends of the line of the circle joined, the people sent out a shout of "Sadhu," which could be heard miles away. Thus Lanka was dedicated to Buddhism, and King Tissa did all he could to show how devoted he was to the new Religion, which was brought to him and his people by King Asoka's great son, Mahinda.

In the Mahamegha Garden, near the Bo-tree which Sanghamitta had brought from India, the Thuparama Dagoba, the first Dagoba in Lanka, was built by King Tissa, and the beautiful Isurumuniya Temple was cut out of a rock. Besides that, King Tissa had some rock cells made in the Mihintale Mountain for the Monks ; as also the Maha-Vihara for Mahinda and his Theras, and the Hatthalhaka Vihara and Hall for Sanghamitta and her Nuns, and very many smaller sacred buildings.

Some of the ruins of these buildings are standing to this day, and they give us an idea about King Tissa's devotion to Buddhism. If you make a trip to Anuradhapura you can see them for

yourselves. The Thuparama Dagoba has lately been restored, and the old Isurumuniya Temple cleared from the jungle which had grown over its venerable head. Many figures carved in the hard granite yet show the skilful work of the builders.

The Bo-tree, which stands in its crumbled down enclosure, is made an object of great veneration, and many Buddhists make pilgrimages there at the present time, and put their flowers of love and devotion at its aged foot. This Bo-tree at Anuradhapura is said to be the oldest historic tree in the world, being about two thousand four hundred years old.

Anuradhapura, the holy city of old, is still the holy city of the Buddhists of Ceylon.

King Tissa did not devote his time entirely to the cause of Buddhism, but he also looked after the welfare of his people in every way possible, as long as he lived.

When we look at the Tissavewa Tank which he built then we must marvel at his wisdom, for through this tank, ever so many paddy fields were watered, and Anuradhapura receives its water supply from it too.

During the whole reign of King Tissa, which lasted for over forty years, the Sinhalese were very happy and contented. Mahinda and Sanghamitta lived and taught in Lanka until the end of their lives, and when they passed away, in the reign of Uttiya, King Tissa's younger brother, who was his successor, the whole of Lanka was a Buddhist country.



"View of Thuparama" (p. 120.)

STORY VIII.

THE POISONED MANGO.

[“Had King Tissa no children,” asked one of the girls the next evening, when all the little crowd had assembled as usual, round their mother, who had again made herself comfortable in her big chair, ready to resume her stories from Ceylon History.

“In answer to your question, my dear Nalini, I must tell you a very sad story. By the way—your question is a very sensible one, and it shows me that you have paid attention to my words, for I said last night, that King Tissa’s younger brother Uttiya succeeded him on the throne.”

“If any more of my eager little listeners will ask me such sensible questions, I shall be glad to answer and explain such things as are not clear to you.”

“So now, for my story, in answer to Nalini’s question, whether our good King Tissa had any children.”

“My story is called *The Poisoned Mango*, and it is a very, very sad little story.”]

Our King Tissa had an only little son, whom he loved very much. But as he was getting old and his son was yet very young he was afraid he might die before his son was grown up. I suppose you remember that King Tissa had nine brothers, and he was the second eldest. He appointed the brother who came next to him, with the name of Mahanaga, to be

Sub-King and govern the country jointly with him. He thought that if he should die, then Mahanaga would be Regent for his son until he had come of age.

Mahanaga was a very good Prince and very religious. He had a high regard and esteem for his brother Tissa, and loved his little nephew very much. So all would have been well, if the Queen, Tissa's wife, had not been so jealous of Prince Mahanaga. *She* wanted to be the Regent for her son after King Tissa's death ; that was her great ambition. She planned and schemed how she could get rid of Prince Mahanaga. Of course King Tissa, who was very unsuspicious, did not know of this, and he told the Queen of his intention to make Mahanaga his successor, if he should die before his little son was able to be King. The Queen got more angry every day, for she could not bear the idea of seeing Mahanaga become King.

One day the Sub-King had gone out to supervise the making of the Taraccha Tank (Bear-tank), and his little nephew, King Tissa's son, had gone with him. The little Prince loved his uncle very much and always tried to go with him, when he had to go out of Anuradhapura. On this fatal morning the little child had pleaded very hard to be taken with him, when he saw his uncle ready to drive out in his Royal chariot, and Mahanaga, doubtful that the Queen would consent, took him along without her knowledge.



“Now this dear little Prince was so glad to see the mangoes that he grasped with his two little hands the first he saw.....and began to eat it” (p. 123.)

While Mahanaga was busy at the tank, the little Prince was resting under a tree, and he was getting very hungry. Then he discovered a jar of mangoes, which had been sent by the Queen herself, as a refreshment for the Sub-King. The Queen had, in order to kill the Sub-King, put a poisoned mango on the very top of the fruits, thinking that if he were to give any to his attendants, he would surely take the first one on the top himself.

Now this dear little Prince was so glad to see the mangoes, that he grasped with his two little hands the first he saw, which was the very one placed by his mother on the top, and he began to eat it. There was such deadly poison in it, that the poor little child, after the first bite, fell down dead at once.

When Mahanaga came back from his inspection tour round the tank, he found his little nephew dead, with the mango in his hands.

["Oh! how dreadful!" cried all the children at once.

"And only think that his own mother did this!"

"Poor King Tissa!" said a thoughtful girl, who had been listening with tears in her eyes. "How sad he must have been, for he was so anxious to have his son come to the throne after him, and go on with all the good work he had started."

"But only think of the feelings of the Queen," cried out another girl,—“it seems to

me she must have wanted to kill herself also, after she found out she had poisoned her only dear little son. She must have been very wicked, but still I pity her, for what a life she must have led after this dreadful deed."

After the girls were quiet again, the story was continued.]

Well, when Prince Mahanaga looked at the poor dear little Prince lying dead before him, with a half-eaten mango in his hands and the open jar with the other mangoes standing near, he understood at once that this poisoned mango must have been meant for him. He heard from his attendants, that the jar of mangoes had been sent by the Queen herself, for his own refreshment. Of course you remember, my children, that the Queen did not know that her own little son had accompanied his uncle, or she would not have put in the poisoned mango.

Mahanaga saw distinctly that his life was not safe, for most likely the Queen would be more angry than ever with him now, and would find other means to kill him. He made up his mind at once that he must leave the Court of King Tissa and take his family with him. So they left secretly and took as many of their possessions with them as they could. They fled to Ruhuna, where they settled, and we shall hear later what became of Mahanaga and his descendants.

[So you see now, the reason why the younger brother of King Tissa had to be his



“ Ambustale Dagoba ” (p. 125.)

successor. It was because his little son was dead, and his brother Mahanaga, who would have had the throne, had fled.]

AFTER KING TISSA'S DEATH.

[This evening, my children, I have to speak to you generally about the state of affairs in Lanka after King Tissa's death, before I can come to my next story or rather small stories. If I did not do that, you would not understand how so many sad troubles arose. You have heard so many interesting stories, that you may be content to hear something less interesting for a while.

"Certainly, dear mother," said Amaravattie, we shall be grateful to hear anything which teaches us something about our own country ; even if it is not very interesting. But I am sure all that you tell us, is interesting. "Do you not think so, too, girls?" she asked !

"Of course we do," said the girls in chorus. "Well then," said the mother, "I will go on."]

After King Tissa's death his younger brother Uttiya reigned, as you already know. He was on the throne for ten years and he tried to follow in his noble brother's footsteps. But there is very little to be said of him except that he was a pious and a good man, and that he built some Dagobas, among which the Ambustale Dagoba on Mihintale Mountain is the most famous one.

Some of his younger brothers (you remember his father King Mutasiva had ten sons) succeeded him. I can say of them only, that they built sacred buildings, but they did not rule Lanka in the way Kings should do. They forgot that for a King to lead a purely religious life may have bad consequences for both the people and the country.

Indeed the Sinhalese, like their Rulers, began to forget the use of weapons and settled down as quiet cultivators of the land or as constructors of religious buildings, and never thought that they might be disturbed in their peace by other people of a warlike character.

Some of the Sinhalese Chiefs, taking advantage of the weakness of the Kings, whose faithful servants they used to be, tried to become little rulers themselves. They grew very powerful, and would not obey the King, so that Suratissa (also one of King Tissa's brothers) invited two Malabar or Tamil Chiefs, who possessed a Tamil army, to Lanka, to help him subdue his rebellious Sinhalese Chiefs. This was a very great mistake, for these two Tamil Chiefs saw very soon how weak the Sinhalese were, and after subduing the Sinhalese Chiefs, they killed the King, took possession of Lanka, and governed it themselves for twenty-two years. You may imagine how sad this was for Lanka! They were rough and cruel men, and the gentle Sinhalese, as well as their Buddhist Religion, had to suffer very much.

At last King Tissa's only remaining brother, Asela, a very old man, raised an army, had the two Tamil Chiefs killed and took the reins of Government into his own hands for ten years.

But the Tamils were conscious of the weakness of the Sinhalese, and a Prince of Chola (which is now Tanjore in South India) with the name of Elala came over to Lanka with a large army, killed poor old King Asela and took possession of Lanka. So that about sixty years after King Tissa's death Lanka was conquered by the Tamils, and a Tamil King ruled over the greater part of it.

We call this "the first Tamil Invasion," and I am sorry to tell you that several of these "Invasions" occurred later in the History of Ceylon.

Of this Tamil King Elala, I must tell you a good deal, for although an enemy of Lanka he has won for himself in history the title of "Elala the Just" on account of his great sense of justice. He even went so far as to have his own son killed because he carelessly killed a calf.]

STORY IX.
KING ELALA THE JUST.

CHAPTER I.
THE JUSTICE-BELL.

The character of King Elala is quite clearly shown in some little stories, which are related of him, which I will tell you now.

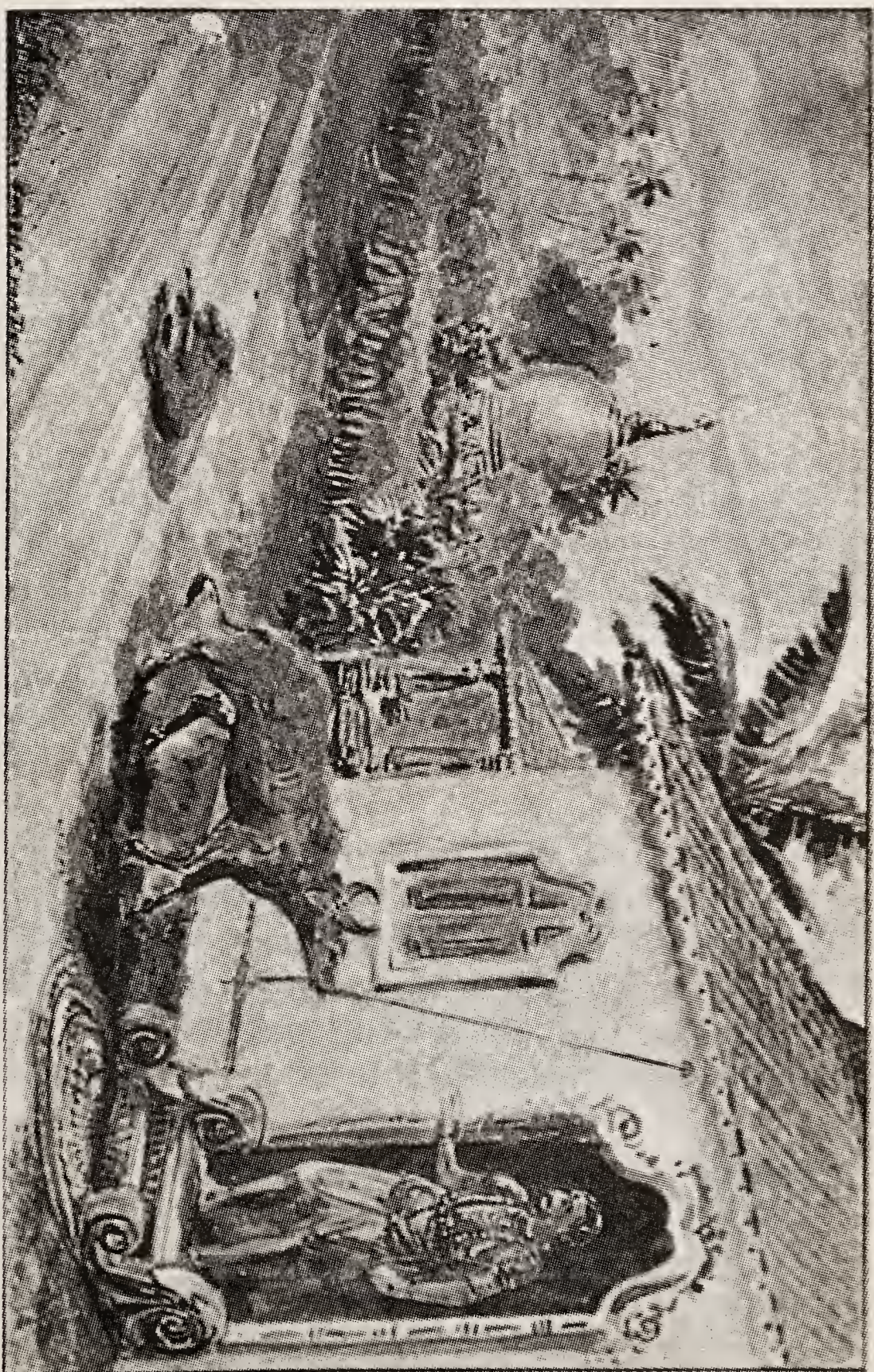
Elala had a bell hung over the head of the bed on which he slept, with a long rope attached to it, which reached outside the palace window.

He announced that anybody, whether man or animal, who had received an injury, might pull this bell-rope and he himself would see that justice was done to the injured party. So this bell was called the "Justice-Bell" of King Elala, and its fame has reached even down to the present time.

King Elala kept to his promise, of always administering justice himself, and how hard sometimes this must have been for him can be seen by what follows :—

One day he heard the justice-bell ringing, and when he came outside he saw a cow pulling at the rope and that a dead calf was lying on the road not far from the palace.

King Elala inquired who had killed the calf for whose violent death its mother evidently asked for punishment at the justice-bell.



“He saw a cow pulling at the Rope” (p. 128.)

To his horror he was told that his own son, while returning from an excursion to the Tissavewa-tank, had been driving recklessly and had killed the calf by running over it with one wheel of his chariot. Not paying any further attention to it, seeing that it was only a calf that he had killed and not a human being, the Prince had driven to his palace, leaving the poor cow standing by the side of her dead calf, trying to bring it to life.

King Elala, very indignant about his son's cruel indifference to the pain he had caused to the poor animal, and thinking of his promise to be perfectly just in every case, although grieved to lose his son, called the "executioner." In spite of the prayers of his Ministers to save the Prince's life he had his son killed with the same chariot-wheel with which the son had killed the calf.

"A life for a life!" he said sadly and went into his palace, where he shut himself up for several days mourning the death of his son.

Such was an example of the stern justice which King Elala put to practice, and which earned him the title of "The Just," and which made even his enemies esteem him.

["How could King Elala do such a thing as to have his own son killed, because he killed that calf accidentally," cried little Susina quite horrified. "I think a good beating would have been enough as punishment."

"No, I think," said Yasodhara, "he ought rather to have been banished from Ceylon.

Then the Sinhalese would have got rid of him without killing him."

"What a pity, that you were not there to advise King Elala," said Somavattie, "I certainly would have helped you to plead for the Prince's life."

"I know some more stories about King Elala's justice," said the mother. "Would you like to hear some of them?"

"Oh yes, please!" cried the children.

"But I see, that it is too late now, so we had better wait till to-morrow for them."]

CHAPTER II.

SOMETHING MORE ABOUT KING ELALA.

One day King Elala was resting a while in his royal bed-chamber after the morning's work of audiences to his Ministers, when the justice-bell tinkled faintly and sweetly over his head. He jumped up at once and looking out of the window he saw a little bird sitting on the window sill. He wondered what the little bird wanted and he came outside to see what it would do. The bird flew to a palmyra palm on which there was an empty nest and under the tree coiled up very comfortably, lay a snake, evidently resting after a good meal.

King Elala understood the meaning of it, for he was very quick to understand such things, and it was even said that he knew the

language of the animals. He saw that while the mother-bird had been absent from the nest, the snake had crawled up to the tree and had swallowed the young bird. The mother-bird coming back with some food for its little one had found the nest empty and had seen the snake swallowing the little bird. Quickly the mother-bird had flown to the palace and tried to ring the justice-bell by flying against it with all its strength.

“My poor little bird,” said the King, “you shall have as much justice as I can give you!” He had the snake cut open and the little bird taken out of it. And the snake was hung up on the palmyra-tree as punishment.

[“Was the bird alive when the King got it out of the snake’s stomach?” asked clever little Leelavattie.

“No dear,” was the answer, “that would not have been possible, for, though snakes swallow their victims whole, they crush their bones before they devour them. Both the snake and the bird were dead.”]

Another little story which is told about King Elala illustrates his kindness very dearly.

An old woman had laid out some paddy to dry in the sun. It was not very much and it was not very good, but it was all she possessed, for she was very poor.

Suddenly a heavy shower of rain came down, wetted her paddy, and it was spoiled. Full of grief, as she would have nothing to eat

now, she gathered up her spoiled paddy, went to the King's palace and rang the justice-bell.

King Elala asked the old woman to tell her trouble. She showed him the spoiled paddy and assured him that the rain was quite unseasonable, and that it ought not to have fallen at that time.

The King comforted the poor old woman, gave her some good, dry paddy in exchange for that which was spoilt, and told her that he would try to make the rain fall at seasonable periods !

He meditated, prayed and fasted, and it is said, that from that time the Devas of the clouds only sent rain once a week in the evening. Thus the tanks and wells were well filled and the people could attend to their agricultural work in the daytime and were not disturbed by unseasonable rains. The Devas did this, history says, because of the goodness and justice of King Elala.

[" The last little story I will tell you of King Elala," continued the mother, " will show you that he was just as strict to himself as he was to his subjects."]

One day he made a trip to the Mihintale Mountain in his royal chariot. On returning to Anuradhapura his chariot wheel knocked by accident against one of the Buddhistic Dagobas, and some of the bricks of which it was built with were loosened and fell down. One of his Ministers, who was in attendance, being a Buddhist, was very much annoyed by

this and reproached Elala saying : “ Do you think, that being our King, you have the right to knock down our sacred buildings ? ”

King Elala saw at once that he had done wrong, and that this might make the people think that he was unjust. So he jumped out of the chariot, prostrated himself on the road and said : “ Strike off my head with the same chariot-wheel with which I have damaged your sacred building, in order to make up for the wrong I have done to it.”

This touched the heart of the Minister, and he refused to hurt the King; although he might easily have got rid of the Tamil King in this way. He answered : “ Our Lord Buddha did not delight in such punishment. He taught us not to kill any living being. How could I kill our King for such a small offence.”

So King Elala paid a large sum of money to repair the damage done to the Thupa. It was very much more than was required, and was enough to repair some other religious buildings also.

I have told you all these stories about King Elala to show you, that although he had come from India as an enemy, had killed the Sinhalese King and taken possession of Lanka, he governed the country justly.

The Sinhalese were not so very unhappy under him, as they had been under the two cruel Tamil Generals of whom I told you.

But he was a Tamil and not a Sinhalese, and you will therefore understand, when after forty-four years of his reign, a courageous Sinhalese Prince of royal birth, of the name of Duttu-Gemunu, rose up against him, that the Sinhalese were very happy and joined their forces with his and fought for their own Prince and for their own Religion. For, although King Elala was tolerant and did not persecute the Buddhist priests, he naturally preferred his own Hindu Religion, and the Tamils who had come with him did not always treat the Buddhists justly as their King did.

After a long severe war King Elala was killed in single combat by Prince Duttu-Gemunu, and once more a Sinhalese Ruler sat on Lanka's throne, one who understood how to set his people an example of piety and goodness, and at the same time how to protect the country with the strong hand of a warrior against foreign enemies.

Duttu-Gemunu became in fact the Hero-King of Lanka, of whom I have to tell you a great deal later on.

[And now, my dear children, we will stop our stories for a while. The holidays are near and you have to use your free time to prepare for your term-examinations.

After you come back to school, I will continue my stories from Ceylon History, and I hope that they will be as interesting to you as those I have told you this term !

“Dear mother” said the eldest of the girls rising, “we are indeed very grateful to you for the interesting and delightful stories which you have told us, and we are quite sure that we will be very eager to listen to you again, when our holidays will be over.”

“Thank you very very much” cried out all the girls in chorus, and they ran quite happy and contented to their studies, which they liked almost as well as the stories from Ceylon History.]



